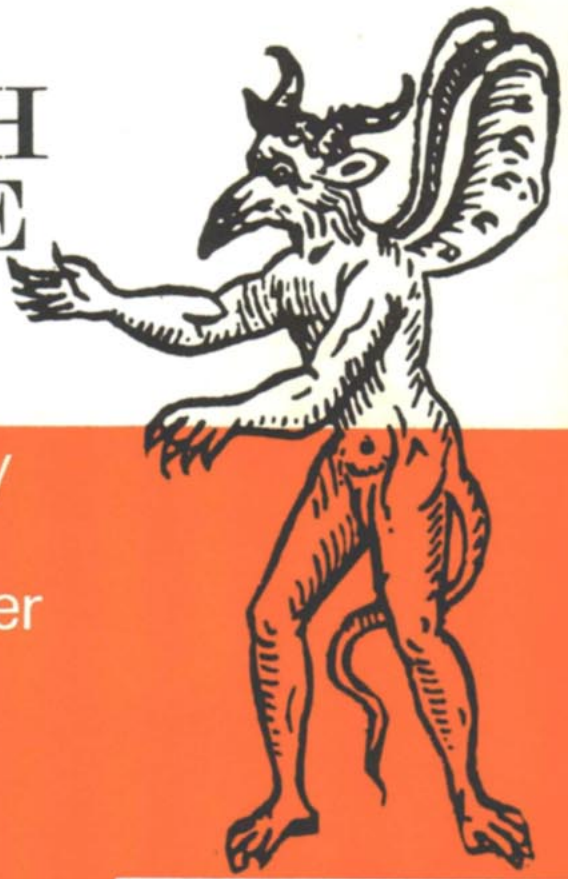
Encounter

THE WITCH CRAZE



Compendium Maleficarum (1626)

an essay by Hugh Trevor-Roper

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The Comic Book Heroes

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Poems

Bernard Bergonzi
Personality Explosion

Arnold Toynbee
On Pieter Geyl

edited by
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May 1967 4s

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Encounter

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H. R. Trevor-Roper

Witches and Witchcraft

An Historical Essay

THE EUROPEAN WITCH-CRAZE of the 16th and 17th centuries is a perplexing phenomenon: a standing warning to those who would simplify the stages of human progress.

Ever since the 18th century, we have tended to see European history, from the Renaissance onwards, as the history of progress, and that progress has seemed to be constant. There may have been local variations, local obstacles, occasional setbacks, but the general pattern is one of persistent advance. The light continually, if irregularly, gains at the expense of darkness. Renaissance, Reformation, Scientific Revolution mark the stages of our emancipation from medieval restraints. This is natural enough. When we look backwards through history we naturally see first those men, those ideas, that point forwards to us. But when we look deeper, how much more complex the pattern seems! Neither the Renaissance nor the Reformation nor the Scientific Revolution are, in our terms, purely or necessarily progressive. Each has a Janus-face. Each is compounded both of light and of darkness. The Renaissance was a revival not only of pagan letters but of pagan mystery-religion. The Reformation was a return not only to the unforgettable century of the apostles but also to the unedifying centuries of the Hebrew kings. The Scientific Revolution was shot through with Pythagorean mysticism and cosmological fantasy. And beneath the surface of an ever more sophisticated society what dark passions and inflammable credulities do we find, sometimes accidentally released, sometimes deliberately mobilised! The belief in witches is one such force. In the 16th and 17th centuries it was not, as the prophets of progress might suppose, a lingering ancient superstition, only waiting to dissolve. It was a new explosive force, constantly and fearfully expanding with the passage of time. In those years of apparent illumination there was at least one quarter of the sky in which darkness was positively gaining at the expense of light.

Yes, gaining. Whatever allowance we may make for the mere multiplication of the evidence after the discovery of printing, there can be no doubt that the witch-craze grew, and grew terribly, after the Renaissance. Credulity in high places increased, its engines of expression were made more terrible, more victims were sacrificed to it. The years 1550–1600 were worse than the years 1500–50, and the years 1600–50 were worse still. Nor was the craze entirely separable from the intellectual and spiritual life of those years. It was forwarded by the cultivated Popes of the Renaissance, by the great Protestant Reformers, by the saints of the Counter-Reformation, by the scholars, lawyers, and churchmen of the age of Scaliger and Lipsius, Bacon and Grotius, Bérulle and Pascal. If those two centuries were an age of light, we have to admit that, in one respect at least, the Dark Age was more civilised.

FOR IN THE DARK AGE there was at least no witch-craze. There were witch-beliefs, of course —a scattered folk-lore of peasant superstitions: the casting of spells, the making of storms, converse with spirits, sympathetic magic. Such beliefs are universal, in time and place, and in this essay I am not concerned with them. I am concerned with the organised, systematic "demonology" which the medieval Church constructed out of those beliefs and which, in the 16th and 17th centuries, acquired a terrible momentum of its own. And when we make this necessary distinction between the organised witch-craze and the miscellaneous witch-beliefs out of which it

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was constructed, we have to admit that the Church of the Dark Age did its best to disperse these relics of paganism which the Church of the Middle Ages would afterwards exploit. Of course it was not entirely successful. Some of the pagan myths, like pagan gods and pagan rites, had crept into the Christian synthesis at an early date and had found lodgment in its outer crannies. St. Augustine in particular, with his baroque mind and African credulity, did much to preserve them: they form an incidental bizarre decoration of the huge doctrinal construction which his authority launched into Western Christendom. But in general, the Church, as the civiliser of nations, disdained these old wives' tales. They were the fragmentary rubbish of paganism which the light of the Gospel had dispelled.

So, in the 8th century, we find St. Boniface, the English apostle of Germany, declaring roundly that to believe in witches and werewolves is unchristian. In the same century Charlemagne decreed the death penalty for anyone who, in newly converted Saxony, burnt supposed witches. Such burning, he said, was "a pagan custom." In the next century St. Agobard, bishop of Lyon, repudiated the belief that witches could make bad weather, and another unknown church dignitary declared that night-flying and metamorphosis were hallucinations and that whoever believed in them "is beyond doubt an infidel and a pagan." This statement was accepted into the canon law and became known as the *canon Episcopi* or *capitulum Episcopi*. It remained the official doctrine of the Church. In the 11th century, the laws of King Coloman of Hungary declined to notice witches "since they do not exist," and in the 12th century John of Salisbury dismissed the idea of a "witches' sabbat" as a fabulous dream. In the succeeding centuries, when the craze was being built up, all this salutary doctrine would have to be reversed. The laws of Charlemagne and Coloman would be forgotten; to deny the reality of night-flying and metamorphosis would be officially declared heretical; the witches' sabbat would become an objective fact, disbelieved only (as a doctor of the Sorbonne would write in 1609) by those of unsound mind; and the ingenuity of churchmen and lawyers would be taxed to explain away that inconvenient text of Canon Law, the *canon Episcopi*.

By the end of the Middle Ages this reversal would be complete. By 1490, after two centuries of research, the new, positive doctrine of witchcraft would be established in its final form. From then on it would be simply a question of applying this doctrine: of seeking, finding, and destroying the witches whose organisation has been defined.

The monks of the late Middle Ages sowed: the lawyers of the 16th century reaped; and what a harvest of witches they gathered in! All Christendom, it seems, is at the mercy of these horrifying creatures. Countries in which they had previously been unknown are now suddenly found to be swarming with them, and the closer we look, the more of them we find. All contemporary observers agree that they are multiplying at an incredible rate. They have acquired powers hitherto unknown, a complex international organisation, and social habits of indecent sophistication. Some of the most powerful minds of the time turn from the human sciences to explore and chart this newly discovered continent, this America of the spiritual world. And the details which they discover, and which are continually being confirmed by teams of parallel researchers—field researchers in torture-chamber or confessional, academic researchers in library or cloister—leave the facts more certainly established and the prospect more alarming than ever.

Consider the situation as shown at any time in the half-century from 1580 to 1630: that half-century which corresponds with the mature life of Bacon and brings together Montaigne and Descartes. The merest glance at any report by the acknowledged experts of the time reveals an alarming state of affairs. By their own confession, thousands of old women—and not only old women—had made secret pacts with the Devil, who had now emerged as a great spiritual potentate, the Prince of Darkness, bent on recovering his lost empire. Every night these ill-advised ladies were anointing themselves with "devil's grease," made out of the fat of murdered infants, and thus lubricated, were slipping through cracks and keyholes and up chimneys, mounting on broomsticks or spindles or airborne goats, and flying off on a long and inexpressibly wearisome aerial journey to a diabolical rendezvous, "the Witches' Sabbat." In every country there were hundreds of such "Sabbats," more numerous and more crowded than race-meetings or fairs. There were no less than 800 known meeting-places in Lorraine alone. Some countries had national, some international centres. Such were the Blocksberg or Brocken in the Harz

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Mountains of Germany, the "delicate large meadow" called Blåkulla in Sweden and the great resort of la Hendaye in south-west France where no less than 12,000 witches would assemble for the gathering known as Aquelarre. The meetings too were remarkably frequent. At first the interrogators in Lorraine thought that they occurred only once a week, on Thursday; but as always, the more the evidence was pressed, the worse the conclusions that it yielded. Sabbats were found to take place on Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday, and soon Tuesday was found to be booked as a by-day. It was all very alarming and proved the need of ever greater vigilance by the spiritual police.

AND WHAT HAPPENED when the witch had reached the Sabbat? The unedifying details, alas, were only too well authenticated. First, she was surprised to observe nearly all her friends and neighbours, whom she had not previously suspected to be witches. With them, there were scores of demons, their paramours, to whom they had bound themselves by the infernal pact; and above all, dominating them all, was the imperious master of ceremonies, the god of their worship, the Devil himself, who appeared sometimes as a big, black, bearded man, more often as a stinking goat, occasionally as a great toad. Those present recognised their master. They all joined to worship the Devil and danced around him to the sound of macabre music made with curious instruments—horses' skulls, oak logs, human bones, etc. Then they kissed him in homage, under the tail if he were a goat, on the lips if he were a toad. After which, at the word of command from him, they threw themselves into promiscuous sexual orgies or settled down to a feast of such viands as tempted their national imagination. In Germany these were sliced turnips, parodies of the Host; in Savoy, roast or boiled children; in Spain, exhumed corpses, preferably of kinsfolk; in Alsace, fricassées of bats; in England, more sensibly, roast beef and beer. But these nice distinctions of diet made little difference: the food, all agreed, was cold and quite tasteless, and one necessary ingredient, salt, for some arcane demonological reason, was never admitted.

Such was the witches' Sabbat, the collective orgy and communal religious worship of the new diabolical religion. In the intervals between these acts of public devotion, the old ladies had, of course, good works to do in the home. They occupied themselves by suckling familiar spirits in the form of weasels, moles, bats, toads, or other convenient creatures; by compassing the death of their neighbours or their neighbours' pigs; by raising tempests, causing blights or procuring impotence in bridegrooms; and as a pledge of their servitude they were constantly having sexual intercourse with the Devil, who appeared (since even he abhors unnatural vice[1]) to she-witches as an *incubus*, to he-witches as a *succubus*.

WHAT GIBBON called "the chaste severity of the Fathers" was much exercised by this last subject, and no detail escaped their learned scrutiny. As a lover, they established, the Devil was of "freezing coldness" to the touch; his embrace gave no pleasure—on the contrary, only pain; and certain items were lacking in his equipment. But there was no frigidity in the technical sense: his attentions were of formidable, even oppressive solidity. That he could generate on witches was agreed by some doctors (how else, asked the Catholic theologians, could the birth of Luther be explained?), but some denied this, and others insisted that only certain worm-like creatures, known in Germany as *Elben*, could issue from such unions. Moreover, there was considerable doubt whether the Devil's generative power was his own, as a Franciscan specialist maintained ("under correction from our Holy Mother Church"), or whether he, being neuter, operated with borrowed matter. A nice point of theology was here involved and much interested erudition was expended on it in cloistered solitudes. Some important theologians conjectured that the Devil equipped himself by squeezing the organs of the dead. This view was adopted (among others) by our King James.[2] Other experts advanced other theories, more profound than decent. But on the whole, Holy Mother Church followed the magisterial ruling of the Angelic Doctor, St. Thomas Aquinas, who, after St. Augustine, must be regarded as the second founder of demonological science. According to him, the Devil could only discharge as *incubus* what he had previously absorbed as *succubus*. He therefore nimbly alternated between these postures. . . . There are times when the intellectual fantasies of the clergy seem more bizarre than the psychopathic de-

[1] Except, apparently in Alsace. See R. Reuss, *L'Alsace au 17e Siècle* (Paris, 1898), II, p. 106.

[2] James VI, *Demonologie, in form of a Dialogue* . . . (Edinburgh, 1597), pp. 66 ff.

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lusions of the madhouse out of which they have, too often, been excogitated.

Such were the human witches, the fifth column of Satan on earth, his front-line agents in the struggle for control of the spiritual world. All through the 16th century, and for much of the 17th, men believed in the reality of this struggle. Laymen might not accept all the esoteric details supplied by the experts, but they accepted the general truth of the theory, and because they accepted its general truth, they were unable to argue against its more learned interpreters. So the experts effectively commanded the field. For two centuries the clergy preached against witches and the lawyers sentenced them. Year after year, inflammatory books and sermons warned the Christian public of the danger, urged the Christian magistrate to greater vigilance, greater persecution. Confessors and judges were supplied with manuals incorporating all the latest information, village hatreds were exploited in order to ensure exposure, torture was used to extract and expand confessions, and lenient judges were denounced as enemies of the people of God, drowsy guardians of the beleaguered citadel. Perhaps these "patrons of witches" were witches themselves. In the hour of danger, when it almost seemed that Satan was about to take over the world, his agents were found to be everywhere, even in judges' seats, in university chairs, and on royal thrones.

BUT DID THIS CAMPAIGN against the witches in fact reduce their number? Not at all. The more fiercely they were persecuted, the more numerous they seemed to become. By the beginning of the 17th century the witch-doctors have become hysterical. Their manuals have become encyclopaedic in bulk, lunatic in pedantry. They demand, and sometimes achieve, wholesale purges. By 1630 the slaughter has broken all previous records. It has become a holocaust in which lawyers, judges, clergy themselves join old women at the stake. That at least, if nothing else, must have enforced an agonising reappraisal.

And indeed, it was in the wake of the greatest of all purges—perhaps in revulsion after it—that the solidity of the witch-hunters began to give way. In the middle of the 17th century—in the 1650s—scepticism, unavailing hitherto, begins at last to break through. Imperceptibly, the whole basis of the craze begins to dissolve, in Catholic and Protestant countries alike. By the 1680s the battle is effectively won, at least in the West. The old habits of mind may linger on; there will be pockets of resistance here and there, recurrence of persecution now and then, but somehow the vital force behind it is spent. Though the argument may go on, the witch-trials and witch-burnings have become once again mere sporadic episodes, as they had been before the Renaissance. The rubbish of the human mind which for two centuries, by some process of intellectual alchemy and social pressure, had become fused together in a coherent, explosive system, has disintegrated. It is rubbish again.

HOW ARE WE to explain this extraordinary episode in European history? In the 18th century, when the men of the Enlightenment looked back on this folly of "the last age" they saw it merely as evidence of the "superstition" from which they had recently been emancipated, and the 19th-century historians, who approached it in a more detached, scientific spirit, interpreted their more abundant material in the same general terms. To the German, Wilhelm Gottlieb Soldan, the first historian of the craze, the witch-cult was a legacy of Greco-Roman antiquity, naturally developed, artificially preserved. To

Compendium Maleficarum (1626)

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him, as to the Englishman W. E. H. Lecky, its gradual conquest was one aspect of the rise of "rationalism" in Europe. To the American Andrew Dickson White it was a campaign in "the warfare of science with theology." But none of these scholars sought to explain why the centuries of Renaissance and Reformation were so much less "rational," less "scientific" than the Dark and early Middle Ages. Even the profoundest of 19th-century historians of witchcraft, Joseph Hansen, the liberal, free-thinking archivist of Cologne, hardly faced this problem. In two important works he collected a mass of documentary material and presented a lucid narrative of "the rise of the great witch-craze"; but as he aimed only to document its origins, he concluded his work once he had brought it to the early 16th century, when "the system of the new witch-craze had achieved its final form." The fact that, in this final form, the craze was to last for two centuries, and those the centuries of Renaissance, Reformation, and experimental science, did indeed perplex him. He suggested that the explanation lay in the survival of "the medieval spirit." This answer, says the modern historian of magic, is "unconvincing." But is his own explanation any more convincing? The witch-craze, says Lynn Thorndike (echoing Michelet), grew naturally out of the misery of the 14th century, that century of the Black Death and the Hundred Years War. These disasters no doubt helped; but they do not explain. As Hansen had already observed, the craze gathered force before either of them had begun, and it continued, in its "final form" for two centuries after both were over: two centuries not of misery but of European recovery and expansion.[3]

While Hansen was writing about the witch-craze in Germany, another great historian was thinking about it in America. In his youth, H. C. Lea had begun a work on "man's assumed control over spiritual forces" in which he hoped to deal with the whole question of witchcraft in the world; but illness interrupted it, and he afterwards deviated into what he described as the "by-path" of "a simpler and less brain-fatiguing amusement." In other words, he wrote his two monumental works on the medieval and the Spanish Inquisition. But the Inquisition cannot be divorced from the subject of witchcraft and in both works Lea found himself brought up against it. In his history of the medieval Inquisition, he showed the gradual merging of sorcery and heresy, and in his Spanish studies he showed that in Spain, "thanks to the good sense of the Inquisition," the witch-craze "was less dreadful than in the rest of Europe." It was not till he was eighty-one that Lea returned to his original subject. He collected, annotated, and arranged a vast mass of material covering the whole history of witchcraft in Christendom; but when he died, the book itself was unwritten. His material, however, has been edited and published, and his interpretation is clear from his notes as from his earlier works.[4]

Lea is one of the greatest of liberal historians. It is inconceivable that his work on the Inquisition, as an objective narrative of fact, will ever be replaced. Its solidity has withstood all partisan criticism. His *History of Witchcraft*, had it been written, would no doubt have stood as firm. Nevertheless, as interpreters of social history, even the greatest of the 19th-century liberal historians now seem to date. Their philosophy was formed in the happy years before 1914, when men could look back on the continuous progress, since the 17th century, of "reason," toleration, humanity, and see the constant improvement of society as the effect of the constant progress of liberal ideas. Against such a background, it was natural to see the witch-craze of the past, like the persecution of Moors and Jews, or the use of torture, or the censorship of books, as a residue of mere obscurantism which growing enlightenment had gradually dispelled, and which would now never return.

Unfortunately, we have seen them return. With the advantage of after-knowledge, we look back and we see that even while the liberal historians were writing, their olympian philosophy was being threatened from beneath. It was in the 1890s that the intellectual foundations of a new witch-craze were being laid. It was then

[3] W. E. H. Lecky, *The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe* (1865). A. D. White, *A History of the Warfare of Science with Theology, in Christendom* (1897). Joseph Hansen, *Quellen und Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Hexenwahns und der Hexenverfolgung im Mittelalter* (1901); *Zauberwahn, Inquisition und Hexenprozess im Mittelalter* (1900). Lynn Thorndike, in *Cambridge Medieval History*, Vol. VIII, pp. 686–7. Jules Michelet, *La Sorcière* (1862).

[4] H. C. Lea, *The History of the Inquisition in the Middle Ages* (1888); *The History of the Inquisition in Spain* (1906). *Materials toward a History of Witchcraft collected by Henry Charles Lea*, arranged and edited by Arthur C. Howland with an introduction by George Lincoln Burr (1957).

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that the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were forged in France and the grotesque mythology of anti-Semitism was used to inspire the pogroms of eastern Europe. To the liberals of the time this new form of superstition was beneath contempt. At most, it was a lingering survival of past superstition. We who have seen its vast and hideous consequences cannot accept so comforting an explanation. Faced by the recrudescence, even in civilised societies, of barbarous fantasies in no way less bizarre and far more murderous than the witch-craze, we have been forced to think again, and thinking, to devalue the power of mere thought. Even intellectual history, we now admit, is relative and cannot be dissociated from the wider, social context with which it is in constant interaction.

This being so, we are prepared to admit, as our ancestors were not, that mental structures differ with social structures, that the "superstition" of one age may be the "rationalism" of another, and that the explanation of intellectual change may have to be sought outside purely intellectual history. We cannot see the long persistence and even aggravation of the witch-craze merely as a necessary effect of clerical domination, or its dissolution as the logical consequence of release from religious fundamentalism. Therefore we may be forgiven for looking at this whole episode, whose basic facts, thanks to the work of our predecessors, are not in dispute, with eyes different from theirs. They saw, through all the centuries, a continuous dialogue between superstition, whose form constantly varied, and reason, which was always the same. We agree with one of the most perceptive and philosophical of modern French historians, that the mind of one age is not necessarily subject to the same rules as the mind of another, that *"dans sa structure profonde, la mentalité des hommes les plus éclairés de la fin du XVIe siècle, du début du XVIIe siècle, ait différé, et radicalement, de la mentalité des hommes les plus éclairés de notre temps."*[5]

WHEN HANSEN wrote that the system of the new witch-craze had achieved its final form by the 1480s, he was referring to the two documents of that decade from which the centralised European witch-craze, as distinct from spasmodic local outbursts, can be dated. The first of these is the papal bull *Summis Desiderantes Affectibus*, issued by Pope Innocent VIII in December 1484, deploring the spread of witchcraft in Germany and authorising his beloved sons, the Dominican Inquisitors Heinrich Institor (Krämer) and Jakob Sprenger, to extirpate it. The second is the earliest great printed encyclopaedia of demonology, the *Malleus Maleficarum*, "the Hammer of Witches," published by these same two Inquisitors two years later, in 1486. The relationship between these two documents is perfectly clear: they are complementary one to the other. The papal bull had been solicited by the Inquisitors, who wished for support in their attempt to launch the witch-craze in the Rhineland. Having obtained it, they printed it in their book, as if the book had been written in response to the bull. The book thus advertised to all Europe both the new epidemic of witchcraft and the authority which had been given to them to suppress it.

The importance of the papal bull of 1484 is incontestable. Apologists for the Papacy have protested that it made no change: it was merely a routine document which authorised the Dominicans to go on doing what they were already doing and told other authorities—bishops and secular powers—not to obstruct their work.[6] No doubt it did this; but it also did something else, which was new. What the Dominicans had been doing hitherto was local. They had been persecuting and burning witches locally. From now on a general mandate was given, or implied. And the *Malleus*, which is inseparable from the bull, gave force and substance to that mandate. First, by its content, by gathering together all the curiosities and credulities of Alpine peasants and their confessors, it built up a solid basis for the new mythology. Secondly, by its universal circulation, it carried this mythology, as a truth recognised by the Church, over all Christendom. Finally, the *Malleus* explicitly called on other authorities, lay and secular, not merely not to obstruct, but positively to assist the Inquisitors in their task of exterminating witches. From now on, the persecution, which had been sporadic, was—at least in theory—made general, and secular authorities were encouraged to use the methods and mythology of the Inquisition. Rome had spoken.

Why did Rome speak? Why did Innocent VIII, that worldly humanist, the patron of Mantegna and Pinturicchio, Perugino and Filip-

[5] L. Fèbvre, "Sorcellerie: Sottise ou Révolution Mentale?" *Annales, Economies-Sociétés-Civilisation* (1948), p. 14.

[6] This is the argument of Ludwig Pastor, *History of the Popes*, Vol. V (2nd English edition, 1901), p. 347.

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pino Lippi, yield to these fanatical Dominican friars? The answer, obviously, is not to be sought in his personality. It is to be sought rather in circumstances: in the historical situation out of which the witch beliefs had arisen and in the war which the Dominican Inquisitors had long been waging against them. This question brings us at once to a particular area, the area in which these beliefs had always been endemic and in which, for two centuries, they had already been persecuted: the mountain areas of Catholic Europe, the Alps and the Pyrenees.

THE MOUNTAIN ORIGIN of the witch-craze is by now well established. So are the circumstances in which it was formulated, and in which the Dominicans came to be its great adversaries. These circumstances bring us back to the very foundation of the order, in the struggle between Western Catholicism and the heresies of the 12th century, the Albigensians of Languedoc and the Vaudois of the Alps. It was to combat these heresies that the Inquisition and the Dominican order had been founded, and it was in the course of that "crusade" that the Inquisitors had discovered, beneath the forms of one heresy, the rudiments (as they thought) of another. From an early date, therefore, they had pressed the Pope to grant them jurisdiction over witchcraft as well as over recognised theological heresy. To the Dominicans the two forms of error were inseparable: one continued the other, and the pursuit must not cease when the formal error had disappeared underground. They could still recognise it by its smell. So, although the form might seem to change, the old names persisted. By the 15th century we hear little of Vaudois or Cathari as theological terms: these errors had been burnt out, at least for a time. But in the Alps, in the Lyonnais, and in Flanders witches are known as *Waudenses* and their gatherings as a *Valdesia* or *Vauderye*, and in the Pyrenees we find them described as *Gazarii* or "Cathars."

When the Dominicans pressed for inquisitorial power over witchcraft, the Papacy had at first resisted. The old canons of the Church, and particularly the *canon Episcopi*, denied the reality of witches and forbade their persecution. Therefore, in 1257, Pope Alexander IV had refused these demands unless manifest heresy, not merely witchcraft, could be proved. But little by little, under constant pressure, the Papacy had yielded. The great surrender had been made by the French popes of Avignon, and particularly by the two popes from Southern France, John XXII and his successor Benedict XII, who had already, as bishops in Languedoc, waged war on nonconformity in the old Albigensian and Vaudois areas. John XXII, who declared heretical the Franciscan doctrine of the poverty of Christ (so dangerously akin to the old Vaudois ideas), also by his constitution *super illius specula* of 1326, authorised the full use of inquisitorial procedure against witches, of whom he lived in personal terror. For the next century and a half—until the Witch Bull of Innocent VIII and indeed afterwards—the main effort of the Inquisitors (although there were some spectacular "political" witchcraft trials in France, Burgundy, and England) had been directed against the witches of the Alps and the Pyrenees.

AT FIRST THE CAMPAIGN was most vigorous in the Pyrenees. From the papacy of John XXII onwards, witch-trials were held all over the old Albigensian territory. But soon they spread to the Alps also. The sitting of the Council of the Church in Basel in 1435–7 gave a great opportunity to the local witch-hunters, and it was in those years that a zealous Inquisitor, John Nider, wrote what has been called "the first popular essay on witches." It was called *Formicarius*, "the Ant-heap," and was based principally on confessions of Swiss witches collected by a Swiss magistrate, Peter of Berne. The *Formicarius* may be regarded as a little *Malleus*, and it had a similar effect in a more restricted field. Papal instructions were sent out to the witch-inquisitors to redouble their zeal, and in 1440 the Pope particularly denounced "that eldest son of Satan, Amadeus, Duke of Savoy," who had given himself over to the witches "or Vaudois" who abound in his land. In the next hundred years some famous Inquisitors were busy in the Alpine valleys—Bernard of Como, Jerome Visconti, Bartolomeo Spina. In 1485, according to the *Malleus*, the Inquisitor of Como burnt forty-one witches all of whom confessed to sexual intercourse with *incubi*, and yet even so the practice was increasing. This was the point of time at which the Witch Bull and the *Malleus* were published.

Meanwhile the Pyrenean Inquisitors, after a temporary lull, had resumed their activities. In 1450 they too produced a little *Malleus*. This was a tract by Jean Vineti, Dominican Inquisitor of Carcassonne: the first work, it seems, to declare

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that witchcraft was a new heresy, unconnected with the old rural beliefs which the Church of the past had tolerated. This separation of the new witchcraft from the old was a point of great technical importance. Indeed, we can say that it gave the witch-craze its charter: for it enabled the Inquisitors to get round the greatest obstacle in the way of witch-persecution: the *canon Episcopi*. About the same time, witch-beliefs were found to have spread to the Spanish slopes of the Pyrenees and the King of Castile was invited to take action against them.

Thus by the time that the authors of the *Malleus* obtained the blessing of Pope Innocent VIII, the craze had already been in operation for nearly two centuries in the mountain areas, the old homes of heresy and centres of inquisitorial persecution. The two authors of the *Malleus*, the solicitors of the bull, were themselves natives of the Alpine regions, and all their examples and cases are drawn from upper Germany. The most active of the pair was Krämer, who was Inquisitor in the Tyrol; he afterwards became Inquisitor in Bohemia and Moravia, where he acted vigorously against the "Waldenses" of Bohemia as well as against witches.

THE ALPS and the Pyrenees, the original cradle of the witch-craze, would long remain its base. Individual witches, of course, might be found anywhere, and in certain circumstances might infect whole areas: for the old un-organised superstitions of the countryside were always there, always ready to be inflamed. Isolated rural societies anywhere—in the dreary flats of the Landes in France, or of Essex in England, or the sandy plain of North Germany—would always be subject to witch-beliefs. Psychopathic disturbances, which could easily be rationalised as witchcraft, are independent of geography. Individual Inquisitors, too, would discover or create beliefs in any area in which they happened to operate: Krämer and Sprenger would have plenty of counterparts among the Protestant clergy—and among the laity too, like Matthew Hopkins, the famous "witch-finder general" of the English Civil War. But these are secondary developments, individual extensions. As a continuing social phenomenon, involving not merely individuals but whole societies, the witch-craze would always be associated particularly with the highlands. The great European witch-hunts would centre upon the Alps and their foothills, the Jura and the Vosges, and upon the Pyrenees and their extensions in France and Spain. Switzerland, Franche-Comté, Savoy, Alsace, Lorraine, the Valtelline, the Tyrol, Bavaria and the north Italian bishoprics of Milan, Brescia and Bergamo; Béarn, Navarre and Catalonia: these would be the primary centres. Here the new heresy had been discovered, hence it would be generalised. From the fantasies of Alpine peasants, the Dominicans elaborated their systematic demonology and enabled or compelled Renaissance popes to denounce a new heresy in Europe. The heads of the old Albigensian and Vaudois heresy were sprouting again.

This prevalence of witchcraft, and of illusions that can be interpreted as witchcraft, in mountainous areas doubtless has a physical explanation. Rural poverty, as Michelet observed, naturally drives men to invoke the spirits of revenge. The thin air of the mountains breeds hallucinations, and the exaggerated phenomena of nature—the electric storms, the avalanches, the cracking and calving of the mountain ice—easily lead men to believe in demonic activity. But these explanations, by themselves, are not enough. Rural poverty, after all, was a commonplace of all centuries. So, no doubt, were some of the beliefs that it engenders. The superstitions of the mountain are but exaggerations of the superstitions of the plain. Why then, we ask, did the Dominicans wage such war on them? Why did they insist on seeing them as something different from the superstitions which, in the plain, the Church had so long tolerated or ignored? What was the underlying, permanent difference which the Dominicans rationalised as successive layers of "heresy"?

SOMETIMES, NO DOUBT, it was a difference of race. The Basques, for instance, were racially distinct from the Latinised Germans—the Franks and the Visigoths—around them. But difference of race, though it may sharpen other differences, is not in itself decisive. It is only when it corresponds with difference of social organisation that conflict or incompatibility arises; and then it is the social difference which decides. In the Middle Ages the men of the mountains differed from the men of the plains in social organisation, and therefore they also differed in those customs and patterns of belief which grow out of social organisation and, in the course of centuries, consecrate it. Theirs, we may almost say, were different civilisations.

Medieval civilisation, "feudal" civilisation, was a civilisation of the plains, or at least of the

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cultivated lands which could sustain the manor and its organisation. In the poor mountain areas, pastoral and individualist, this "Feudalism" had never fully established itself. Sometimes Christianity itself had hardly penetrated thither, or at least it had not been maintained there in comparable form. Missionaries might have carried the Gospel into the hills, but a settled Church had not institutionalised it, and in those closed societies a lightly rooted orthodoxy was easily turned to heresy or even infidelity. M. Fernand Braudel, in his incomparable work on the Mediterranean, has commented, briefly but brilliantly, on this fact. He has pointed to isolated mountain societies long untouched, or only superficially touched, by the religion of state and easily—if as superficially—converted to the heresy of new evangelists or the religion of a sudden conqueror. The conversion of the mountains to Christianity—or, for that matter, to Islam—was far from complete in the 16th century; and he refers to the Berbers of the Atlas mountains, and the highland Kurds in Asia, so slowly won for Mahomet, "while the highlands of Spain will preserve the religion of the Prophet in Christian Spain and the wild Alps of Lubéron protect the lingering faith of the Vaudois."[7]

The mountains, then, are the home not only of sorcery and witchcraft but also of primitive religious forms and resistance to new orthodoxies. Again and again they have to be won back to sound religion; for missionaries come and go and the established Church does not easily take root in such poor soil. We see this in England, where the North and West, "the dark corners of the realm," would have to be re-evangelised by puritan missionaries a century after the Reformation, and in Scotland, where the Highlands would relapse into "paganism" and would need to be recovered by a new puritan movement in the 18th century. What would happen in Britain after the Reformation had happened in Europe before it. The Dominicans were the evangelists of the "dark corners" of Europe where the Catholic Church was not permanently established. As such they carried the gospel of "feudal" Christian Europe into the un-feudal, half-Christian societies of the mountains, and inevitably, in that different world, found that their success was transitory: that ancient habits of thought reasserted themselves, that social incompatibility clothed itself in religious heresy, and that when formal heresy had been silenced or burnt out, the same fundamental incompatibility took, or seemed to take, another form. The old rural superstition, which had seemed harmless enough in the interstices of known society, assumed a more dangerous character when it was discovered, in strange, exaggerated form, among the barely subdued "heretics" of the highlands. Thanks to that social gulf, that social inassimilability, witchcraft became heresy.

[7] Fernand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Epoque de Philippe II* (1949), pp. 12–15.

ONCE WE SEE the persecution of heresy as social intolerance, the intellectual difference between one heresy and another becomes less significant. Innocent VIII was the persecutor of Bohemian Hussites and Alpine "Vaudois" as well as of witches, just as John XXII had persecuted Fraticelli as well as witches. Social persecution is indivisible, or at least does not stop at mere intellectual frontiers. But if we wish to see this point more strikingly illustrated, it is useful to turn from one form of Inquisition to another. Only four years before the worldly humanist pope, Innocent VIII, yielded to the German Dominicans and launched his bull against the witches of Europe, his predecessor, the even more worldly humanist pope, Sixtus IV, had yielded to the Spanish Dominicans and approved the new Inquisition in Spain. It is difficult entirely to separate these two gestures, so close in time, so similar in consequence, so distinct in place and circumstance; and in fact, by looking at them together, we may be able to shed some light upon them both.

For the Spanish Inquisition, like the medieval Inquisition, was originally set up to deal with formal heresy, and neither the Jews nor the Moors of Spain, at the time of its creation, were subject to it. Heresy is a crime of Christians; the Jews and Moors were then "unbelievers." But gradually both Jews and Moors were brought under the control of this organ of social conformity, just as witches had been brought under the control of the medieval Inquisition. The witches had been brought under this control by the device of an extended definition of heresy; the Jews and Moors were brought under that of the Spanish Inquisitors by the device of compulsory conversion to Christianity. In both cases, the engine of persecution was set up before its future victims were legally subject to it. In both cases, once legally subject to it, the original pre-

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text of their subjection was forgotten. Both witches and converted Jews were first subjected to the Inquisition as heretics, but before long both were being burnt without reference to ideas, the former as witches, the latter as Jews.

Moreover, in both cases, the persecutors were the same. It was the Dominicans who, from the start, had persecuted the witches in the Alps and the Pyrenees. It was the Dominicans also who, with some help from the Franciscans, had been the great persecutors of the Jews. This too had been, at first, a sporadic persecution. It had broken out in Germany during the Black Death, when the Jews were accused of poisoning the wells and were burnt in hundreds by angry crowds and petty magistrates. It had broken out in Italy, where the stern Franciscan St. Bernardino of Siena had inflamed the mobs against the usurious crucifiers of Christ. From 1391 pogroms had been constant in Spain where the Catalan demagogue, the Franciscan St. Vicente Ferrer, had rivalled the exploits of St. Bernardino in Italy. The establishment of the Inquisition in Spain was a triumph of the Spanish Dominicans, the expulsion of the unconverted Jews (which left the rest of them subject to the Inquisition) a triumph for the Franciscan cardinal Ximénez. Both these campaigns can be seen as part of a general evangelical crusade by the friars. That crusade would culminate, in the reign of Innocent VIII's successor, Alexander VI, with the attack on the "pagan" papacy itself by the Dominican friar Savonarola.

THE SIMILARITY BETWEEN the persecution of Jews and the persecution of witches, which reached their climax in different places at the same time, suggests yet again that the pressure behind both was social. The witch and the Jew both represent social non-conformity. At first both are persecuted sporadically, without much reason given; for the witch is not condemned by the old law of the Church and the Jew, as an unbeliever, is outside it. Then legal grounds are devised to prosecute both: the former by a redefinition of terms, the latter by enforced baptism, is made liable to a charge of heresy. Finally, when that charge is no longer convenient, it is no longer used. The witch, as we shall see, is persecuted simply for "being a witch," the Jew for "being a Jew," for reasons not of belief but of blood, for defect of *limpieza de sangre*. Thus the reasons vary but the persecution continues: clear evidence that the real reason lies deeper than the reason given.

Moreover it sometimes seems that these two types of social nonconformity are interchangeable. In its periods of introversion and intolerance, Christian society, like any society, looks for scapegoats. Either the Jew or the witch will do, but society will settle for the nearest. The Dominicans, an international order, hate both; but whereas in the Alps and Pyrenees they pursue witches, in Spain they concentrate on Jews. It is not that there are no witches in Spain. The Pyrenees, after all, are as much Spanish as French, and in the 14th and 15th centuries, when the Roman Inquisition operated in Aragon, the witches of northern Spain supplied many of its victims. The earliest of all general treatises on witchcraft was written in 1359 by a Dominican Inquisitor-general in Aragon, and in the next century Spanish witches—*bruxas* and *xorguinas*—gave as much trouble to the champions of orthodoxy as Spanish Jews. Numerous works on demonology were produced in Spain in the 15th and early 16th centuries, and Spanish *expertise* in such matters was exported to other countries. But once the Inquisition had been firmly established, the local order of priority asserted itself. With Jews and Moors on their hands, the Inquisitors had very little time for witches, and so they have won glowing tributes for their "firmness" and "temperate wisdom" in this respect.[8]

IN GERMANY, on the other hand, the priorities are reversed. There, outside the Alpine regions, there is little or no persecution of witches in the 14th and early 15th centuries; but those are the years of terrible anti-Jewish pogroms. About 1450 the Inquisitors begin to extend the craze down the Rhine, and this, of course, is the immediate purpose of the *Malleus*. In the 16th century the witch gradually replaces the Jew, and in the 17th the reversal is almost complete. If the universal scapegoat of the Black Death in Germany had been the Jew, the universal scapegoat of the Wars of Religion will be the witch. There were exceptions to this generalisation, of course. The Rostock jurist Dr. Gödelmann, for

[8] Lea, *History of the Inquisition in Spain*, IV, 217–8. For witchcraft cases in Spain outside the Basque provinces, see also Sebastián Cirac Estopañan, *Los Procesos de Hechicerías en la Inquisición de Castilla la Nueva* (Madrid, 1942) and the excellent introduction by Agustín Gonzalez de Amezúa to his edition of Cervantes, *El Coloquio de los Perros* (Madrid, 1912).

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instance, at the end of the 16th century, evidently hated Jews more than the witches about whom he explicitly wrote. He would suspend his liberal utterances about the latter in order to vent his hatred of the former: a blasphemous, impious race rightly expelled from their dominions by many Christian rulers.[9] Perhaps he was merely behind the times. And really good Germans (like Luther) would contrive to hate both together: at the close of the 16th century the Catholic Elector of Trier and the Protestant Duke of Brunswick would set out to exterminate both. But in general the emphasis fell either on one or on the other. In our own days it has fallen back upon the Jews.

This interchangeability of victims, which suggests that both Jews and witches were persecuted rather as types of social nonconformity than for doctrinal or other given reasons, can be illustrated in many ways. In medieval Hungary, for instance, witches were sentenced, for a first offence, to stand all day in a public place, wearing a Jew's hat. Witchcraft was one of the charges often made against the Jews. But the neatest instance of alternative priorities between the same two social groups is shown by the events on either side of the Pyrenees in the years 1609–10.

In those years there was a sudden panic of denunciation in the old Kingdom of Navarre which had once straddled the Pyrenees but was now divided into two parts, one governed from Paris, the other from Madrid. The king of France, Henri IV, who was also king of Navarre, in response to the clamour of the noblemen and syndics of the Pays de Labourd, issued a commission to the President of the Parlement of Bordeaux and to the counsellor of the Parlement, Pierre de l'Ancre, to deal with the matter. In four months these energetic officials, both bigoted Catholics, burnt nearly a hundred witches, including several priests. But in describing his triumphs afterwards, and in denouncing the practices which he and his colleague had so gloriously repressed, de l'Ancre did not stop at witches. A whole section of his work is devoted to denunciation of the Jews: their absurd and indecent rites and beliefs, their cruelty, their greed, their poisoning of Christian wells, their forcible circumcision and ritual murder of Christian children. The Jews, says de l'Ancre, "by their filth and stink, by their sabbaths and synagogues," are so disgusting to God that he has not only withdrawn from them his grace and his promise: he has also condemned them to creep about the world "like poor snakes," deprived of every kind of office, dignity or public employment. The Jews, he adds, are ordinarily great magicians: they turn themselves into wolves by night; they can never be converted into good Christians. In other words, they behave just like witches.

Thus in French Navarre the stereotype of the enemy of society is the witch: but the Jew is not forgotten. He comes second, to take the fag-end of persecution, or at least of denunciation. On the Spanish side of the Pyrenees the persecution is no less, but the order of priority is reversed. There in this same year, 1609, the Inquisition had achieved one of its great triumphs: the expulsion from Spain, as inassimilable heretics, of the whole *morisco* population. Next year, in 1610, the Inquisition in Navarre, where there were no *moriscos*, dealt with its local tensions. At a great *auto-da-fé* in Logroño, fifty-three persons were presented. Many of them were Jews, but no less than twenty-nine were presented as witches. But when the Spanish Inquisition reached the humble category of witches, its appetite was already slaked. Of those twenty-nine, six were burnt alive, another six, having died in prison, were burnt in effigy. The remaining eighteen, having confessed and repented, were spared. As Lea remarks, under any other jurisdiction, they would have been burnt. And even this relatively merciful sentence led to a commission of enquiry which concluded, in effect, that all witchcraft was an illusion, so that Spanish witches enjoyed thereafter an even greater immunity. As Michelet wrote, the Spanish Inquisition, *"exterminatrice pour les hérétiques, cruelle pour les Maures et les Juifs, l'était bien moins pour les sorciers."* Having chosen its victims elsewhere, it could afford to overlook the base, even bestial deviations of Pyrenean goatherds.

So, in 1609–10, as in 1478–84, the persecution of witches can be seen as part of the same process as the persecution of Jews. That persecution was not doctrinal: it was not (whatever excuse might be given) because the victims were "heretics." It was not launched merely by the personal decision of a bigot in the papal chair. Neither Sixtus IV nor Innocent VIII were bigots —nor were Leo X and Clement VII, the Medici popes, who continued the process. Nor was the

[9] J. G. Gödelmann, *De Magis, Veneficis et Lamiis ... Libri III* (Frankfurt, 1591), pp. 51–4.

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established Church bigoted. In general, the established Church is opposed to the persecution. In the 1480s the established authorities—bishops and secular clergy as well as princes and city governments—disliked it. The authors of the *Malleus* found themselves obstructed by the ecclesiastical establishment in Germany and they were reduced to forging the approbation of the University of Cologne. The Archibishop of Trier resisted the bull, declaring that there were no witches in his diocese. (A century later it would be very different.) Even when the persecution was in full swing, the distinction is still perceptible. The Gallican Church would oppose it in France, the Anglican Church in England, the Catholic Church at its headquarters, Rome.[10] The pressure throughout came from a lower level, from the missionary orders who moved among the people, on the sensitive social frontier between differing communities, whether in the heart of a multi-racial society, as in Spain, or in frontier areas, the areas of missionary activity. The Popes might authorise, but the pace was set by the tribunes of the people, and the tribunes in their turn, responded to popular pressure, seeking a scapegoat for social frustration.

FOR NO RULER HAS EVER carried out a policy of wholesale expulsion or destruction without the co-operation of society. To think otherwise, to suppose that a ruler, or even a party in the state, can thus cut out part of the living tissue of society without the consent of society, is to defy the lesson of history. Great massacres may be commanded by tyrants, but they are imposed by peoples. Without general social support, the organs of isolation and expulsion cannot even be created. The social resentment of the Spanish *pueblo*, not the bigotry of Spanish kings, lay behind the foundation of the Spanish Inquisition. Spanish society approved the persecution of the Jews and welcomed the expulsion of the *moriscos*. French society applauded the massacre of the Huguenots in 1572 and their expulsion in 1685. German society supplied Hitler with the means of destroying the Jews. Afterwards, when the mood has changed, or when the social pressure, thanks to that blood-letting, no longer exists, the anonymous people slinks away, leaving public responsibility to the preachers, the theorists, and the rulers who demanded, justified, and ordered the act. But the historian must present to it too its share of the account. Individually that share may be infinitesimal, but collectively it is the largest of all. Without the tribunes of the people, social persecution cannot be organised. Without the people, it cannot be conceived.[11]

So it was with the persecution of witches. If the Dominicans, by their constant propaganda, created a hatred of witches, they created it in a favourable social context. Without that context their success is inexplicable. But within that context, these tribunes played an essential part. From the very beginning it was they who detected the social pressure. It was they who mobilised it. And in order to mobilise it, they also supplied the mythology without which it could never have become a European movement. To this mythology we must now turn.

THE MYTHOLOGY of the witch-craze, I have suggested, was articulation of social pressure. In a religious society, such articulation generally takes the form of heresy. But before examining any heresy, it is useful to ask who in fact articulated it. Was it the heretics themselves, or was it the Inquisitors who articulated it for them? This is an important question, applicable to many historic heresies. It applies, among others, to the Albigensians and to the Vaudois. So, when the Inquisitors discovered a new "heresy" beneath the ruins of Albigensianism, we naturally ask the same question. Did they really discover this new heresy, or did they invent it?

It has been argued by some speculative writers that the demonology of the 16th century was, in essence, a real religious system, the old pre-Christian religion of rural Europe which the new Asiatic religion of Christ had driven underground but never wholly destroyed. But this is to confuse the scattered fragments of paganism with the grotesque system into which they were only long afterwards arranged. The primitive peoples of Europe, as of other continents, knew

[10] Practically no witches were burnt in Rome in the whole period of the witch-craze. See Nikolaus Paulus, *Hexenwahn und Hexenprozess, vornehmlich im 16ten Jahrhundert* (1910), pp. 260 ff.

[11] Is it necessary to document these statements? Then let the reader refer to the works of Américo Castro for the Spanish Inquisition; let him observe the conflict between personal humanity and social fear, in respect of the expulsion of the *moriscos*, in the contemporary works of Cervantes and Fernández de Navarrete; let him read M. Jean Orcibal's *Louis XIV et les Protestants*; and let him digest the profound and terrible book of Mr. Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews* (1961).

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of charms and sorcery, and the concept of night-riding "with Diana or Herodias" survived into the early Christian centuries; but the essential substance of the new demonology—the pact with Satan, the witches' Sabbat, the carnal intercourse with demons, etc., etc.—and the hierarchical, systematic structure of the kingdom of the Devil, are an independent product of the later Middle Ages.[12] All the evidence makes it clear that the new mythology owes its system entirely to the Inquisitors themselves. Just as anti-Semites build up, out of disconnected titbits of scandal, their systematic mythology of ritual murder, poisoned wells, and the world-wide conspiracy of the Elders of Zion, so the Hammerers of Witches built up their systematic mythology of Satan's kingdom and Satan's accomplices out of the mental rubbish of peasant credulity and feminine hysteria; and the one mythology, like the other, once launched, acquired a momentum of its own. It became an established folk-lore, generating its own evidence, and applicable far outside its original home.

How that folk-lore was established is clear enough to anyone who reads the successive manuals of the Inquisitors. Fighting against the enemies of the Faith, they had easily divided the world into light and darkness, and having systematised the kingdom of God into a *Summa Theologiae*, what was more natural than to systematise the kingdom of the Devil in a *Summa Demonologiae*? The method was the same: the only difference lay in the nature of the material. The basic evidence of the kingdom of God had been supplied by Revelation. But the Father of Lies had not revealed himself so openly. To penetrate the secrets of his kingdom, it was therefore necessary to rely on indirect sources. These sources could only be captured members of the enemy intelligence service: in other words, confessing witches.

So THE DOMINICANS SET TO WORK and their efforts were soon rewarded. Since a system was presupposed, a system was found. The confessions —those disconnected fragments of truth hardly won from the enemy—were seen as the few visible projections of a vast and complex organisation, and so every new confession supplied fresh evidence for deductive minds. The same logic which had constructed the great work of the Angelic Doctor would construct a series of demonological manuals confirming and extending each other. The climax, because of its timing and distribution, would be the *Malleus*. When it was published, it carried on its title-page the bold epigraph, *Haeresis est maxima opera maleficarum non credere*, "to disbelieve in witchcraft is the greatest of heresies." It was the exact opposite of the ruling of the Church in the Dark Ages. Since the 9th century, the wheel had come full circle.

BUT IF THE THEORY of Satan's kingdom, with its hierarchy of demons and witches, rested ultimately on the confessions of witches, how were these confessions obtained? The question is crucial. If the confessions were freely given, we have to admit at least the "subjective reality" of the experiences confessed, and then the remarkable identity of those confessions, which converted many a 16th-century sceptic, becomes a real problem. On the other hand, if the confessions were obtained by torture, that problem hardly exists. The similarity of answers can be explained by a combination of identical questions and intolerable pain. Since some of the most distinguished historians of witchcraft have adopted this explanation,[13] we must clearly examine the whole question of the part played by judicial torture in the trial of witches.

Judicial torture had been allowed, in limited cases, by Roman Law; but Roman Law, and with it judicial torture, had been forgotten in the Dark Ages. In the 11th century Roman Law had been re-discovered in the West, and torture had soon followed it back into use. In 1252 Innocent IV, by the bull *Ad Extirpanda*, had

[12] The idea that witch-beliefs were lingering relics of a systematic pre-Christian religion, made fashionable by the late Margaret Murray, is in fact far older than her work. It was advanced by Jakob Grimm, who, in his *Deutsche Mythologie* (1835) argued that the witch-cult was no other than the ancient Teutonic religion. In this form it was refuted by Soldan, who argued that, in so far as it contained pagan concepts, those concepts could be traced to Roman (and so to Greek and Oriental), not to Germanic paganism. The distinction may be too fine: possibly some of the coarser ingredients, though justified from literary sources, were directly derived from German paganism. But however that may be, the demonological system, as distinct from the particular details incorporated in it, is demonstrably scholastic and medieval.

[13] Soldan, Lea, and Soldan's 20th-century editor, Max Bauer, ascribed a great deal of demonological science, but not all, to torture. Lea's disciple and biographer, G. L. Burr, seems, in his essays on witchcraft, to have gone further and to have supposed that torture created witchcraft.

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authorised its use against the Albigensians. By the 14th century it was in general use in the tribunals of the Inquisition, and it was used, particularly, in cases of witchcraft, where evidence was always difficult to find. In 1468 the Pope declared witchcraft to be *crimen exceptum* and thereby removed, in effect, all legal limits on the application of torture in such cases. It was not, as yet, used by the secular courts; and Lea points out that certain of the more extravagant and obscene details of witches' confessions do not, at first, appear before secular tribunals but only before the tribunals of the Inquisition. In other words, they were obtained only by the courts which used torture. But this distinction between lay and clerical practice did not last for long. At the time of the Renaissance the medieval Inquisition was everywhere in decay and, north of the Alps at least, the secular courts had taken over many of its functions. Thus cases of witchcraft in Germany and France were judged by secular lords who had higher jurisdiction. But at the same time the procedures of Roman Law were adopted in the criminal law of all countries of Western Europe except England. Thus England alone escaped from the judicial use of torture in ordinary criminal cases, including cases of witchcraft.[14] It may also be observed that some of the more extravagant and obscene details remain absent from the confessions of English witches.[15] When we consider all these facts, and when we note that the rise and decline of the European witch-craze corresponds generally with the rise and decline of judicial torture in Europe, we may easily conclude that the two processes are interdependent: that the Dark Ages knew no witch-mania because they lacked judicial torture and that the decline and disappearance of witch-beliefs in the 18th century is due to the discredit and gradual abolition of torture in Europe. We may also observe that, since torture has been revived in certain European countries, absurd confessions have returned with it.

That this general conclusion is true, is, I believe, undeniable. The evidence supplied by Lea clearly shows that the witch-craze grew by its own momentum; that witches' confessions became more detailed with the intensification of inquisitorial procedure; and that the identity of such confessions is often to be explained by the identity of procedure rather than by any identity of experience: identical works of reference, identical instructions to judges, identical leading questions supported by torments too terrible to bear. This natural inference is also supported by positive evidence. Accused witches often admitted to their confessors that they had wrongly accused both themselves and others, and these admissions are the more credible since they brought no advantage to the accused—unless they were willing, as they seldom were, to make a formal retraction, which meant submitting to torture again. Some judges refused to allow testimony because they knew that it had been created by torture and was therefore unreliable; and it was the increasing recognition of this fact which, more than anything, ultimately discredited the whole science. As Sir George Mackenzie, the Lord Advocate of Scotland, declared of the Scottish witches who were still being burnt in his time, "most of all that ever were taken were tormented after this manner, and this usage was the ground of all their confession."

It might well be. When we consider the fully-developed procedure at Continental or Scottish witch-trials we can hardly be surprised that confessions were almost always secured. For such a crime, the ordinary rules of evidence, as the ordinary limits of torture, were suspended. For how could ordinary methods prove such extraordinary crimes? As Jean Bodin would write, not one in a million would be punished if the procedure were governed by ordinary laws. So, in the absence of a "grave *indicium*," such as a pot full of human limbs, sacred objects, toads, etc., or a written pact with the Devil (which must have been a rare collector's piece), circumstantial evidence was sufficient to mobilise the process. And the circumstantial evidence need not be very cogent: it was sufficient to discover a wart, by which the familiar spirit was suckled; an insensitive spot which did not bleed when pricked; a capacity to float when thrown into water; or an incapacity to shed tears. Recourse could even be had to "lighter *indicia*," such as a tendency to look down when accused, signs of fear, or the mere aspect of a witch, old, ugly,

[14] There were exceptions, *e.g.*, for high treason, —and the English common law provided *peine forte et dure*—pressing to death—for refusal to plead. But these exceptions are not germane to the present argument. There was also some non-judicial torture in ill-regulated cases: *e.g.*, during the Civil War, when Matthew Hopkins and his assistants used the *tormentum insomniae*.

[15] England was unique in another respect too. English witches, unlike those of Europe and Scotland, were not burnt (as for heresy) but hanged.

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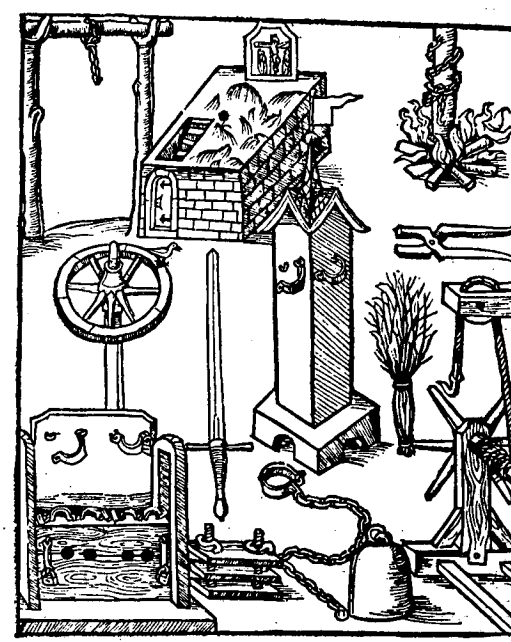
or smelly. Any of these *indicia* might establish a *prima facie* case and justify the use of torture to produce the confession, which was proof, or the refusal to confess, which was even more cogent proof and justified even more ferocious tortures and a nastier death.

OF THE TORTURES used, we have plenty of evidence. Basically they were the same throughout the lands of Roman Law. There were the *gresillons* (in Scottish *pennywinkis*) which crushed the tips of fingers and toes in a vice; the *échelle* or "ladder," a kind of rack which violently stretched the body, and the *tortillon* which squeezed its tender parts at the same time. There was the *strappado* or *estrapade*, a pulley which jerked the body violently in mid-air. There was the leg-screw or Spanish boot, much used in Germany and Scotland, which squeezed the calf and broke the shin-bone in pieces—"the most severe and cruel pain in the world," as a Scotsman called it—and the "lift," which hoisted the arms fiercely behind the back; and there was the "ram" or "witch-chair," a seat of spikes, heated from below. There was also the "Bed of Nails" which was very effective for a time in Styria. In Scotland one might also be grilled on the *caschielawis*, and have one's finger-nails pulled off with the *turkas* or pincers; or needles might be driven up to their heads in the quick. But in the long run perhaps nothing was so effective as the *tormentum insomniae*, the torture of artificial sleeplessness which has been revived in our day. Even those who were stout enough to resist the *estrapade* would yield to a resolute application of this slower but more certain form of torture, and confess themselves to be witches. Once a witch had confessed, the next stage was to secure from her, again under torture, a list of all those of her neighbours whom she had recognised at the Witches' Sabbat. Thus a new set of *indicia* was supplied, clerical science was confirmed, and a fresh set of trials and tortures would begin.

It is easy to see that torture lay, directly or indirectly, behind most of the witch-trials of Europe, creating witches where none were and multiplying both victims and evidence. Without torture, the great witch-panics of the 1590s and the late 1620s are inconceivable. But can we ascribe the whole craze, in effect, to torture, as some liberal writers seem to do? Can we suppose that witchcraft had no other basis than the fanaticism and prurience of the Inquisitors, spellbound by their own inventions? I must confess that I find this difficult to believe. The problem seems to me more complex than that. If the confessions were merely a response to torture we would have to explain why even in England, where there was no judicial torture, witches confessed to absurd crimes;[16] why the people were so docile in the face of such a mania; and above all, why some of the most original and cultivated men of the time not only accepted the theory of witchcraft but positively devoted their genius to its propagation. For, as Lucien Fèbvre said, although we may dismiss Henri Boguet and many others as "imbeciles," we have to stop before the great figure of Bodin: Bodin the Aristotle, the Montesquieu of the 16th century, the prophet of comparative history, of political theory, of the philosophy of law, of the quantitative theory of money, and of so much else, who yet, in 1580, wrote the book which, more than any other, reanimated the witch-fires throughout Europe. To turn over the pages of Bodin's *De la Démonomanie des Sorciers*, to see this great man, the undisputed intellectual master of the later 16th century,



Instruments of Torture
(Bamberg Witch Trials, 1508)

[16] "Note also," Reginald Scot wrote, "how easily they may be brought to confess that which they never did, nor lieth in the power of man to do." *Discovery of Witchcraft*, epistle to Sir Thomas Scot, J.P. (1584).

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demanding death at the stake not only for witches but for all who do not believe every grotesque detail of the new demonology, is a sobering experience. After such an experience it is impossible, absurd to suppose that the confessions of witches were mere clerical fabrications, imposed upon reluctant victims by instruments of torture.

NOR IS THE COINCIDENCE IN TIME of judicial torture and the witch-craze in any way decisive. When we look closely at the dates, we find that the abolition of torture did not precede but often followed the disintegration of witch-beliefs. Torture was not abolished in Prussia till 1740 (although it had been brought under strict control in 1714); but the Prussian Land Law of 1721 had already declared that no belief could be placed in the pact with the Devil, night-riding to the Sabbat, metamorphosis, intercourse with demons, etc.; and since the law always lags behind the fact, we can assume that the belief had already faded. In Bavaria the decisive blow to the belief was struck by the Theatine monk Ferdinand Stertzinger in 1766, but torture was not abolished till 1806. In France witch-beliefs died before the Revolution, torture after it. In general, it seems clear that it was the growing disbelief in confessions produced by torture which brought torture into discredit: in other words, that the disintegration of witch-beliefs led to the abolition of torture, not *vice versa*.

What then is the origin of those confessions, and of their general identity? When we read the confessions of 16th- and 17th-century witches, we are often revolted by the cruelty and stupidity which bring them to light and sometimes, undoubtedly, supply their form. But equally we are obliged to admit their fundamental "subjective reality." For every victim whose story is evidently created or improved by torture, there are two or three who genuinely believe in its truth. This duality forbids us to accept single, comprehensive, rational explanations. The 16th-century clergy and lawyers were rationalists. They believed in a rational, Aristotelean universe and from the detailed identity of witches' confessions they logically deduced their objective truth. To the "patrons of witches" who argued that witches were "aged persons of weak brains" whose melancholy natures were exploited by the Devil, the Rev. William Perkins could reply with confidence that, if that were so, each would have a different fantasy; but in fact men of learning had shown "that all witches throughout Europe are of like carriage and behaviour in their examinations and convictions." Such international consistency, he argued was evidence of central organisation and truthful testimony.

The liberal scholars of the 19th century were also rationalists. They knew that, objectively, the confessions of witches were worthless. Therefore they found another explanation of their identity. They ascribed it to the identity of the questions and the pressure of torture. But we in the 20th century are not rationalists—at least in our approach to human behaviour and human belief. We do not look only for external causes of identical expression or identical illusion. We look also for internal causes, and we find them in human psychology and psychopathology.

THAT EXTERNAL SUGGESTION alone did not account for witches' confessions is clear when we descend to detail. Again and again, when we read the case histories, we find witches freely confessing to esoteric details without any evidence of torture, and it was this spontaneity, rather than the confessions themselves, which convinced rational men that the details were true. It was because he had heard confessions given without torture that Paolo Grillandi, a judge of witches in central Italy in the early 16th century, was converted to the belief that witches were transported bodily to the Sabbat. Bodin too assures us that the confession which converted him to the science of demonology and inspired him to become its most formidable propagandist was made *"sans question ny torture"*; and yet the woman, Jeanne Harvellier of Verbery near Compiègne, had been remarkably circumstantial. Not only had she compassed the death of man and beast: she had also had the Devil for her paramour for thirty-eight years during which he had visited her *"en guise d'un grand homme noir, outre la stature des hommes, vestu de drap noir,"* coming to her by night, on horseback, booted and spurred, with a sword at his side. She had also described her visits to the Sabbat in copious detail; and here too the detail had exactly confirmed the science of the demonologists: the long and tiring journey which left her utterly exhausted, the adoration of a big black man whom they called Belzebub, the sexual promiscuity. Bodin admits that such a story seemed strange and almost incredible at second-hand.

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But he had heard it himself; he was a man of the world; and he was personally convinced of its spontaneity. Who are we to doubt his conviction?

Or take the case of Françoise Fontaine, the servant-girl whose interrogation at Louviers by Loys Morel, *prévôt-général* of Henri IV in Normandy, was discovered and published in full in 1883. Here there was no question of torture: the *prévôt* was a humane man, and the story was elicited by patience, not pressure. And yet the story is the standard story, even down to the details: the visit of the Devil through the window, in the guise of "*un grand homme tout vestu de noir, ayant une grande barbe noire et les yeux fort esclairantz et effroyables*"; the large promises made; the oppressive solidity of his attentions, the lack of pleasure derived from them, the ice-cold contact.... In his introduction to the document, the Vicomte de Moray has shown from the evidence of the Salpêtrière hospital in Paris that every detail of Françoise Fontaine's experience has its parallel today: the diabolic incubus is only the 16th-century form of a kind of sexual hysteria familiar to every 20th-century psychiatrist.

Only...? No, not quite. For there is, in these numerous 16th-century and 17th-century cases one ingredient which has since disappeared: the Devil. Today, every psychopath has his or her private obsession. The supposed *incubi* and *succubi* vary from patient to patient. In the past, the neurotics and hysterics of Christendom centralised their illusions around the figure of the Devil just as the saints and mystics centralised theirs around the figure of God or Christ. So, while the pious virgins, having vowed themselves to God, felt themselves to be the brides of Christ, the less pious witches, having bound themselves to Satan, felt themselves to be his concubines. The former, like St. Theresa or Madame Guyon, enjoyed ecstasies of glowing pleasure piercing their inmost entrails as they clung to the mystical body of their Saviour; the latter, like Françoise Fontaine or a hundred others who were dragged before their judges, felt joyless pangs as they lay crushed in the embrace of that huge black figure who "*jettoit quelque chose dans son ventre qui estoit froid comme glace, qui venoit jusques au dessus de l'estomac et des tétins de ladite respondante.*" In the former, the psychopathic experience was sublimated in the theology of the Fathers, and they might be canonised; in the latter it ran into disorder in the folklore of the demonologists, and they might be burnt.[17]

HERE, SURELY, we see what the Dominican Inquisitors had done, what their successors would do. They did not, of course, discover a concealed world of demons, objectively there (as they supposed). They did not even discover a systematic illusion, a false religion of paganism behind the true religion of Christ. Doubtless there were some pagan survivals in witchcraft just as there were some pagan survivals in Christianity. In Lorraine, for instance, the Sabbat was ascribed, incidentally, to the old "high places" of pre-Christian worship. But what was taken over was mere fragments, not a system: it was the Inquisitors who supplied the system. Nor did those Inquisitors invent a purely imaginary system, in the ordinary sense of that verb: they may have used their ingenuity to create the system, but they did not create the basic evidence on which it rested. They found it in the confessions of supposed witches; and as those confessions seemed genuine to the witches who made them, we can hardly blame

Devil and Witch (1493)

[17] There is no need to press the comparison: it is obvious to anyone who faces the evidence. Compare, for instance, the evidence in any sexual witch-trial with the evidence given in Leuba, *The Psychology of Religious Mysticism* (1926) or the grotesque treatises of the 16th- and 17th-century demonologists with the hardly less grotesque lives of the baroque saints.

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the Inquisitors for supposing them to be genuine too. What was "subjective reality" to the penitent was "objective reality" to the confessor. Out of those fragments of truth, spontaneously given if also amplified by suggestion and torture, a total picture of Satan's kingdom could, by logic, by the "rationalism" of the time, be built up.

THUS THE GENESIS of the 16th-century witch-craze can be explained in two stages. First, there is the social tension. Just as systematic anti-Semitism is generated by the ghetto, the *aljama*, not by the individual Jew, so the systematic mythology of the witch-craze was generated not by individual old women casting spells in scattered villages—these had always been tolerated—but by unassimilable social groups who, like the Jews and Moors of Spain, might be persecuted into outward orthodoxy but not into social conformity, and who therefore became, as the others did not, objects of social fear. It was out of this tension that the frustrated evangelists began to manufacture the new mythology of Satan's kingdom. That that mythology was entirely fantastic need not here concern us. We may merely observe that, in this respect, it is not unique.[18] Some of the ideas and practices ascribed to the Albigensians, and before them to other esoteric sects, had been no less fantastic, and the absurdity of inquisitorial demonology should be a salutary warning to us never to trust the accounts which a persecuting society has drawn up of any esoteric heresy with which it is at war. But once the mythology had been established, it acquired, as it were, a reality of its own. Ideology is indivisible, and those who believed that there were devil-worshipping societies in the mountains soon discovered that there were devil-worshipping individuals in the plains.

[18] Anyone who supposes that the absurd and disgusting details of demonology are unique may profitably look at the allegations made by St. Clement of Alexandria against the followers of Carpocrates in the 2nd century A.D. or by St. Epiphanius against the Gnostic heretics of the 4th century A.D., or by St. Augustine against certain Manichaean heretics—or, indeed, at the remarks of Tacitus on the early Christians or of the orthodox Catholics on the Albigensians and Vaudois of the 12th century and the Fraticelli of the 14th. In these recurrent fantasies the obscene details are often identical, and their identity sheds some light on the psychological connection between persecuting orthodoxy and sexual prurience. The springs of sanctimony and sadism are not far apart.

So the second stage of the witch-craze developed out of the first. The new mythology provided a new means of interpreting hitherto disregarded deviations, an explanatory background for apparently innocent nonconformity. Whatever seemed mysterious and dangerous (like the power of Joan of Arc), or even mysterious and merely odd, could best be explained by it. Nonconformists themselves, in search of a sustaining ideology, even deliberately took up the newly revealed doctrines. Sadists, like Gilles de Raïs, dignified their brutalities by giving them a satanic impulse; helpless victims of society clutched at it for relief; and psychopaths co-ordinated their delusions about its central theme.

In a climate of fear, it is easy to see how this process could happen: how individual deviations could be associated with a central pattern. We have seen it happen in our own time. The "McCarthyite" experience of the United States in the 1950s was exactly comparable: social fear, the fear of an incompatible system of society, was given intellectual form as a heretical ideology and suspect individuals were persecuted by reference to that heresy. In the same way, in the 14th and 15th centuries, the hatred felt for unassimilable societies was intellectualised as a new heresy and politically suspect individuals were brought to judgment by reference to it. The great sorcery trials in France and England at that time—the trials of the Templars and Joan of Arc, of the Duchess of Gloucester and the Duchess of Bedford—were political exploitations of a social fear, whose origins were to be found at a deeper level and in another field. The difference was that whereas McCarthyism in America lasted only a few years (although it may yet recur) the European witch-craze had a far longer history. The new ideology reached its final form in the 1480s. From the publication of the *Malleus* onwards, its basic content never changed. There was no further development. And yet equally there was no disintegration. It formed a reservoir of monstrous theory from which successive persecutions were fed: persecutions which did not diminish but were positively intensified in the course of the next 200 years.

THE DURATION of the witch-craze is certainly surprising, for whatever forces may have created it there were others which would seem naturally to undermine it. In the

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14th century, that century of plague and depression and social dislocation, the mental climate might be congenial; but the later 15th century, which saw the craze formally launched, was the beginning of a period of new European expansion. Nor was the craze, even then, firmly accepted. The established Church—the bishops and the secular clergy—had no great love of the friars and their fanatical doctrines. The educated urban laity of Europe were in no mood to swallow the Alpine credulities, the monkish phantasmagoria of excited missionaries. City governments, even in what were to become the classic lands of witchcraft, resisted the craze, with varying success, even at its height.[19] Besides, the Witch Bull and the *Malleus* appeared in an age of enlightened criticism. It was the time of Renaissance humanism, when Lorenzo Valla and Erasmus[20] and their disciples, under the protection of princes and free cities, were using human reason to dissolve ancient superstitions and established errors. At a time when the older forgeries of the Church were being exposed and the text of scripture critically examined, why should new absurdities escape scrutiny? Surely the Donation of Constantine and the apostolic authorship of the Apocalypse were not more obviously improbable than *succubi* and the Sabbat.

So we are not surprised to find, at the beginning, a good deal of dissent. When the Archduke Sigismund of Austria learned of the new doctrines which were to be extirpated from his Tyrolean lands, he consulted a learned civil lawyer, a doctor of Padua, now professor in Constance, to give him advice: and the lawyer, Ulrich Müller (*alias* Molitor), replied with a treatise in which he insisted that although there were witches who listened to the suggestions of the Devil and who therefore deserved to die, nevertheless these witches had none of the powers which they claimed but were the victims of despair or poverty or village hatreds. Such opinions were widely repeated. Lawyers like Andrea Alciati and Gianfrancesco Ponzinibio, philosophers like Cornelius Agrippa of Nettesheim and Girolamo Cardano, medical men like Antonio Ferrari, called Galateo, even Franciscan Schoolmen like Samuel de'Cassini, all agreed that the powers claimed by witches, or ascribed to them, were largely illusions. They were the hallucinations of melancholy, half-starved persons; they should be interpreted by lay science—the science of medicine and law—not theology; and their proper cure was not fire but hellebore, the classical cure for mere human insanity. Such a view had already been advanced two centuries ago by the famous medieval physician of the University of Padua, Peter of Abano, who now became widely quoted by all the enemies of the

[19] Thus the magistrates of Metz, in the witch-ridden duchy of Lorraine, at least resisted the claims of the Dominican Inquisitor to be sole judge in 1456. The Senate of Venice similarly opposed the operations of the Dominican Inquisitors in the dioceses of Bergamo and Brescia. The city of Cologne successfully kept down the persecution until 1629. The city of Nuremberg was an island of safety for witches in Bavaria throughout the period. The city of Strasbourg was another such island in Alsace. The city of Lübeck survived the 16th century almost untouched by the craze.

[20] The attitude of Erasmus towards witchcraft is disputed. His references to it are few, and their interpretation (since he never explicitly affirms or questions its reality) depends on the amount of irony which can be detected in the tone of his voice; which in turn depends on the reader. A letter of 14 January 1501 concerning a sorcerer of Meung-sur-Loire has been interpreted as showing scepticism by some, credulity by others. But I find it difficult to read Erasmus' accounts of the witches near Freiburg-im-Breisgau, one of whom caused a village to be burnt down, while the other conducted an amour with an innkeeper's daughter and inundated a village with fleas, as written in a serious spirit. Erasmus himself described such stories as *vulgi fabulas*. In any case, it is clear that the general philosophy of Erasmus was sceptical, and it seems safer, with him as with Grotius, Selden, Bacon, etc., to deduce his particular views from his known general ideas than to seek to extract evidence of belief from casual and elliptical references.

Moreover, the very silence of Erasmus is expressive. In his *Annotations on the New Testament* he avoids every opportunity of encouraging the demonologists. On all those passages from which Catholics and Protestants alike deduced the power of the Devil to intervene in human affairs (*Matt.* iv. 5, *Luke* iv. 2, *Rev.* xxi. 12), Erasmus is almost ostentatiously unhelpful. *"Diaboli nomen,"* he says firmly, in connection with the temptation of Christ (and the Devil's power to transport Christ to the pinnacles of the Temple was one of the stock proofs of his power to transport witches to the Sabbat) *"... non spiritum impium sed simpliciter delatorem aut calumniatorem significare videtur."* In this, as in so much else, he is followed by Grotius. And since Erasmus regarded the encounters of the Desert Fathers, Paul and Anthony, with the Devil, though described by St. Jerome, whom he revered, as imaginary, he is unlikely to have given more credit to the similar encounters of witches, as described by monks, whom he hated. De l'Ancre, incidentally, included Erasmus among the sceptics whose incredulity had culpably weakened the crusade against witches, and Weyer, the greatest opponent of the craze, was a disciple of Erasmus.

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witch-craze—and as widely attacked by its promoters. Indeed, the University of Padua, the centre of Renaissance science, became the citadel of common sense against the new mythology: its doctors appealed from the new Aristotle of the Schoolmen to the original Aristotle of Stagira, and in that process the philosophical basis of witchcraft dissolved. Agostino Nifo, doctor of Padua and physician to *el Gran Capitán*, Gonzalo de Córdova, and to Pope Leo X, showed that, in a true Aristotelean universe, there was no room for demons. The greatest of the Paduans, Pietro Pomponazzi, went further. Cautiously, and hedging his meaning with pious lip-service to orthodoxy (for his work on the immortality, or rather mortality, of the soul had already been publicly burnt in Venice), he argued that all the marvels which the vulgar, and the Church, ascribed to demons could be explained away by other influences. Those influences were not yet purely "natural" forces: they were celestial bodies and hidden powers. But at least they were not diabolic interventions. Pomponazzi maintained that apparitions were natural phenomena and that men "possessed by the devil" were merely melancholic. "Had his views prevailed," writes the greatest authority on Renaissance magic, "there would hardly have been any witchcraft delusion and persecution or religious wars."[21]

IF THE REVIVED AND PURIFIED Aristoteleanism of the Renaissance pointed one way out of the Satanic cosmology, another very different way was pointed by the revived Platonism, or rather neo-Platonism, of Florence. The scientific revolution of the 16th and 17th centuries, it is now generally agreed, owed more to the new "Platonism" of the Renaissance, and to the "Hermetic" mysticism which grew out of it, than to any mere "rationalism" in the modern sense of the word. Ficino, with his "natural magic," Paracelsus for all his bombast, Giordano Bruno in spite of his "Egyptian" fantasies, did more to advance the concept and investigation of a regular "Nature" than many a rational, sensible, "Aristotelean" scholar who laughed at their absurdities or shrank from their shocking conclusions. It was precisely at the time of the Witch Bull that Platonic ideas were adopted in Italy and it was during the next century and a half that they provided the metaphysical impulse to the exploration of Nature. Nature, to the neo-Platonists, might be filled with "demons" and charged with "magical" forces, operating by sympathies and antipathies. It might not exclude the existence of "witches"—creatures who, by arcane methods, contrived to short-circuit or deflect its operations. But at least it had no need of such vulgar mechanism as particular Satanic compacts, with their ridiculous concomitants of carnal intercourse, "imps," broomsticks and the Witches' Sabbat. It is no accident that "natural magicians" like Agrippa and Cardano and "alchemists" like Paracelsus and his disciples were among the enemies of the witch-craze, while those who attacked Platonist philosophy, Hermetic ideas, and Paracelsian medicine were also, often, the most stalwart defenders of the same delusion.[22]

THUS IT MIGHT seem that the dogmas so magisterially formulated by the *Malleus* would soon crumble against the corrosive ideas of the new century. However, they did not.

[21] Lynn Thorndike, *History of Magic and Experimental Science*, Vol. V (1941), p. 110.

[22] Agrippa and Cardano were both frequently attacked as being themselves witches (*e.g.*, by Bodin and James VI). So was the greatest critic of the witch-craze, Johann Weyer, who had been a pupil of Agrippa. Among Weyer's supporters was Dr. Johann Ewich, a physician, who was also an advocate of natural magic although both he and Weyer opposed Paracelsus. On the other hand Thomas Erastus of Heidelberg impartially attacked Paracelsus on medicine (in his *Disputationes de Medicina Nova Paracelsi*, 1572) and Weyer on witches (in his *Disputatio de Lamiis*, 1578), and the Provençal physician Jacques Fontaine of St. Maximin was equally extreme in his diatribes against witches and against Paracelsus (Cologne, 1612). The French Huguenot Lambert Daneau showed himself an obscurantist Aristotelean scientist in his *Physice Christiana*, as well as an obscurantist believer in witches in his *de Veneficis*. The French scholar Gabriel Naudé, in his *Apologie pour les grands hommes soupçonnés de Magie*, 1625, shows himself an admirer of the Platonists, Hermetics and Paracelsians and an opponent of witch-beliefs. The same is true of the English physician John Webster (see his *Displaying of Supposed Witchcraft*... 1677).

This equation of Platonists and "natural magicians" with critics of the witch-craze is not constant and some Platonists—like the "Cambridge Platonists" Henry More and Joseph Glanville—were also believers in witchcraft. But basically it seems to me that Renaissance Platonism and Paracelsianism were incompatible with the crude form of witch-belief which had been established on the basis of scholastic Aristoteleanism.

For this reason I am not convinced by the suggestion of Lucien Fèbvre that Renaissance Platonism, merely because it postulated a world of demons, positively contributed to witch-beliefs. They were a very different kind of demons.

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The sceptics spoke only to be instantly overpowered by the defenders of faith. Those who deny the existence of *incubi* and *succubi*, declared the Dominican Inquisitor of Lombardy, Sylvester Mozzolino, "*catholice non loquuntur.*" These lawyers, protested Mozzolino's disciple Bartolommeo Spina, referring to Ponzinibio, are altogether ignorant of theology: they should be prosecuted by the Inquisition as the chief cause of the increase of witches. The robust Dominican Vincente Dodo announced that he would pursue the wavering Franciscan Cassini with a brandished sword. Afterwards the lay judges who inherited the mantle of the Inquisitors would speak with the same voice. Peter of Abano and Alciati and Agrippa and all their followers, and all lenient judges (Bodin would write) were themselves witches, inspired by Satan in order to divert attention from their own kind and so enable them to multiply in peace.

All through the 16th and 17th centuries this dialogue continued. The voice of scepticism—the scepticism of common sense, the scepticism of Paduan science, the scepticism of Platonic metaphysics—was never stilled. Every orthodox writer pays reluctant tribute to it by his hysterical denunciations of the unbelievers thanks to whom witches are multiplying so terribly in the world. Nevertheless, at least until the middle of the 17th century, the orthodox always prevailed. The voice of dissent was powerless to stay the persecution. It could hardly be uttered in safety. Romances of chivalry could be laughed out of existence, but no Don Quixote dared to kill, by ridicule, the bizarre novelettes which the grave lawyers and divines of all Europe published about Satan's kingdom.

Why was this? Some explanations easily offer themselves. The new intellectual forces were themselves ambivalent. The humanist spirit might be critical in a Valla or an Erasmus, but it could be uncritical in others to whom the very fables of Greece and Rome were as holy writ: and those fables—of Circe, of Pegasus, of the amours of gods with men—could be called in to sustain the witch-beliefs. The pseudo-Aristoteleanism of the Church had the support of a vested interest which the true Aristoteleanism of Padua had not. The gulf between the neo-Platonic demons, which filled and animated all Nature, and the diabolic hierarchy of the Inquisitors might be very deep and logically impassable, but to the common eye—and even to some uncommon eyes—it was also very narrow and could be jumped. When Ficino and Pico della Mirandola, Reuchlin and Cardano, Copernicus and Paracelsus, Giordano Bruno and Campanella all believed, or seemed to believe, that men, by arcane knowledge, might make angels work for them and so control the movements of heaven, it was not unreasonable for ordinary men to suppose that witches, by a baser acquisition of power, might make devils work for them and so interfere with events on earth.

However, in matters of ideology, it is not generally the ideas which convince. Between two interpretations of any philosophy it is often external events which make the decision. Therefore if we are to ask why the witch-craze, established in its final form in the 1480s, was proof against all criticism for nearly 200 years, we should perhaps turn back again from its intellectual content to its social significance. We may begin by considering its history, the timing, in relation to external events, of its great outbreaks.

Once we do this, we soon see that a pattern emerges. The 14th and 15th centuries had been periods of spectacular individual persecutions but not, outside the Alps and the Pyrenees, of mass-crazes. What we have seen, in those centuries, is the formulation of doctrine on the basis of Alpine and Pyrenean experience and the application of it in particular trials, often of a political character. The Witch Bull and the *Malleus* mark the final presentation of the doctrine and help to extend it beyond its original frontiers. They demand a renewed crusade in the mountain areas, but at the same time they carry it outside those areas and call upon the support of secular as well as clerical authorities. In particular, they extend it, or seek to extend it, to lower Germany: that Germany which is already showing signs of the impending revolt from Rome, and in which the great adversaries of Luther would be the Dominicans.

In the immediately following generation we can see the results. The crusade against the Alpine peoples is renewed. There is intenser persecution in Styria and the Tyrol. Then, from 1500 to 1525, there is a real social war, disguised as witch-hunting, in the Italian Alps. According to the Dominican Inquisitor in the diocese of Como, a thousand witches were tried and a

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hundred burnt in his area every year. In the end the population took up arms and appealed to the bishop. The bishop sent a lawyer to report, and the lawyer convinced himself, and told the bishop, that very few of the persecuted peasants were really witches. In 1520 this crusade in the mountains was extended from the Alps to the Apennines and a long persecution soon began in the diocese of Bologna. Simultaneously it spread to the Pyrenees and Spanish Inquisitors set to work in Guipúzcoa and Vizcaya. Meanwhile, in Germany, obedient to the bull, the secular powers began to take up the task which the Inquisitors had been powerless to carry out.

But apart from occasional activity in Germany, the first half of the 16th century, outside the Alps and Pyrenees, was a period of relative calm. The witch-hunt, it seemed, had passed its peak, or perhaps the sceptics were prevailing. In France, after the spectacular trials of the 15th century, witchcraft seemed forgotten. Even in Germany, in spite of the *Malleus* and the Inquisitors, the persecution remained slight. Moreover, the law refused to make witchcraft in itself punishable by death. Luther and the Dominicans might vie with each other in credulous ferocity, but the imperial constitution of 1532, the *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina*, if it generalised the Roman Law against witchcraft, also insisted on the old Roman distinction between the "good" and the "bad" witch. Punishment could only be for harm done by witchcraft: merely to "be" a witch was not enough. Even in Switzerland, in those years, persecution was negligible. Geneva, that mercantile city, the seat of international fairs and an educated *bourgeoisie*, had long been free from witch-trials. In Schwyz they were unknown till 1571. Zürich, under Zwingli, was mild: Zwingli himself never showed any signs of belief in witchcraft. Erasmian Basel listened to the witch-stories of the surrounding mountains with polite amusement.

But if the sceptics thought that they were prevailing, they were soon to know better. If the Catholic evangelists had launched the craze, the Protestant evangelists would soon revive and extend it. Already, in the 1540s, there had been warning signs. In 1540, in Luther's Wittenberg, four witches were burnt. On this subject Luther himself was as credulous as any Dominican, and as he grew older, he contrived to believe more: *succubi, incubi,* night-flight and all. Witches, he declared, should be burnt even if they did no harm, merely for making a pact with the Devil. In Zürich, Zwingli's successors did not imitate his restraint. In Geneva, Calvin held the same language as Luther.

> The Bible [he declared, preaching to the Elect on the Witch of Endor] teaches us that there are witches and that they must be slain. . . . God expressly commands that all witches and enchantresses shall be put to death; and this law of God is an universal law.

The law of God was stated most explicitly in *Exodus* xxii.18: "thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." On this savoury text the Protestant clergy—Lutheran, Calvinist, Zwinglian—were to preach, with grim relish, for the next century; and they did not fail to point out that the law of God, unlike the law of the Emperor, made no exception in favour of "the good witch."

WHEREVER THEY WENT, they carried the craze with them. It was Lutheran preachers who first brought it to Denmark, Calvinist missionaries who implanted it in Transylvania. Like the Dominicans before them, the Protestant evangelists introduced the systematic mythology of the Inquisition into countries which hitherto had known only the disconnected superstition of the countryside. It was Lutheran preachers who brought the witch-craze in the 1560s into Brandenburg, Württemberg, Baden, Bavaria, Mecklenburg. It was the Calvinist revolution which brought the first witch-law to Scotland in 1563 and thus inaugurated a century of terror. In the previous year the first general witch-law had been passed by the English Parliament. In both Scotland and England the pressure came from the "Marian exiles"—the Protestant clergy who, in the days of persecution, had sat at the feet of Calvin or other Reformers, in Switzerland and Germany.

The responsibility of the Protestant clergy for the revival of the witch-craze in the mid-16th century is undeniable. It has led some commentators to argue that Protestantism has a special responsibility for such beliefs. But this is absurd: it is to judge on far too narrow a basis. To dispose of such a conclusion, we need only look back to the Dominicans. We may equally look forward to the Jesuits.

For if the Dominicans had been the evangelists of the medieval Counter-Reformation, the Jesuits were the evangelists of the 16th-century Counter-Reformation, and if Protestant evangelists carried the craze to the countries which they conquered for Reform, these Catholic evangelists carried it equally to the countries which they reconquered for Rome. Some of the

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most famous of Jesuit missionaries distinguished themselves in propagating the witch-craze: St. Peter Canisius, the apostle of Germany; Peter Thyraeus, the oracle of the witch-burning archbishop of Mainz; Fr. Schorich, the court-preacher of the Duke of Baden; Gregor von Valentia, the theologian of Ingolstadt; Jerome Drexel, court-preacher to the insatiable Duke of Bavaria; Georg Scherer, the court-preacher of the Emperor in Vienna. It was the Catholic reconquest which brought the witch-craze in a terrible form to Bavaria, where Dukes William V and Maximilian I, great patrons of the Jesuits, kept the witch-fires burning. It was the Catholic reconquest which decimated the Rhineland in the 1590s, and the Jesuits who stood behind its greatest executioners, the Archbishop of Trier and his terrible suffragan, Bishop Binsfeld. It was the Catholic reconquest which introduced witch-burning into Flanders, and the Jesuit del Rio who would keep it up. Philip II's letters patent of 1590, declaring witchcraft the scourge and destruction of the human race, inaugurated a long reign of terror in Flanders. The Counter-Reformation brought the witch-craze to Poland as the Reformation had brought it to Hungary. The restitution of clerical power in 1600 led to the renewal of witch-trials in Franche-Comté. Special powers granted by the Pope in 1604 enabled Duke Maximilian to intensify the crusade in Bavaria. Pierre de l'Ancre, the gleeful executioner of the Pays de Labourd in 1609, gloried in his Jesuit education.

THUS IF WE LOOK at the revival of the witch-craze in the 1560s in its context, we see that it is not the product either of Protestantism or Catholicism but of both: or rather, of their conflict. Just as the medieval Dominican evangelists had ascribed witch-beliefs to the whole society which resisted them, so both the Protestant and Catholic evangelists of the mid-16th century ascribed the same beliefs to the societies which opposed them. The recrudescence of the absurd demonology of the *Malleus* was not the logical consequence of any religious idea: it was the social consequence of renewed ideological war and the accompanying climate of fear. The parties drew on a mythology which was already there, elaborated out of a similar situation by their medieval predecessors. Perhaps, on the eve of the Reformation, that mythology was on the way out. Who can say what might have happened if Erasmus had triumphed instead of Luther and Loyola? Then the Renaissance might have led direct to the Enlightenment and the witch-craze have been remembered as a purely medieval lunacy. But that was not to be. The frontal opposition of Catholics and Protestants, representing two forms of society incompatible with each other, sent men back to the old dualism of God and the Devil and the hideous reservoir of hatred, which seemed to be drying up, was suddenly refilled.

(A concluding part will be published next month.)

From a 16th-century German pamphlet

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D. J. Enright

After the Gods, after the Heroes

You can see how easily a man is silenced.
Merely two or three helpers to twist his arms
Behind his back, shove him into a conveniently
Parked vehicle, take him to a quiet place and
Beat his teeth in. Eventually he falls silent.

Don't talk about heroism. Its lifetime is a breath.
Heroes with bullets in their heads are just
Bodies. Their families are put to the expense of
Burying them. Even the quietest funeral costs money.

Opinion is informed these days. No one's readily
Excited. There have been so many heroes.
Sensibility alters from generation to generation, and
The general feeling is that people who get into trouble
Are troublesome. And the ones who fail to recover are
Born suicides.

In any case, can even the expert tell a hero from a
Villain? What are the distinguishing marks?

The history books are full already.
You can't buy space in the papers for love or money.
The papers are occupied with quintuplets, with modes,
With civil murder, with the heroism of pet dogs.
Don't adduce the inspirational power of example
But rather the dehortative authority of example.
No use talking of freedom as if it were an essential
Vegetable or a family car. You are talking to
Knowledgeable men and women, who eat vegetables, who
Drive cars.

It hurts to say so, but in our time
Perhaps you will have to rely on the others, on
Paterfamilias and materfamilias, clerks bored by their
Work, graduates with pass degrees and no special field,
Grandads out for a last fling, girls with odd fancies,
Boys who would write poems, if they could, and get it
Off their chests . . .
Those non-heroes that the poorest country's rich in.

The leaders of the masses seem to have stopped
Leading. Now you are left with the masses.
Their separate preferences and small tenacious ambitions,
Their tendency (being too many to shoot or put in prison)
To survive in private.

Either that, or else go hang yourself,
Die in private. Leave an open letter, dignified,
Reproachful. Also, if the papers are to print it,
Irreproachable and brief.

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Column

OVER a year ago I wrote in this column, at the time of the Moors murder trial: "If it was ever shown, even in a single case, that a reading of *Justine* has inspired anyone to practise what de Sade preached in such repetitive detail, I should regard it as a complete justification for preventing the publication of his works." Now Miss Pamela Hansford Johnson, who reported the Moors trials for the *Sunday Telegraph* and was profoundly disturbed by the experience, has written a little book, *On Iniquity*, which raises the question whether *Justine* did not provide a kind of blueprint which Ian Brady and Myra Hindley followed in committing their terrible crimes; and also the further question whether, if in fact this was so, society is right in making it as easy as it does now for books like *Justine* to fall into the hands of people like Brady and Hindley.

Miss Hansford Johnson directs her questions particularly at intellectuals, because she thinks they have a heavy responsibility for creating the climate of opinion which allows writers and artists the freedom which they enjoy today:

> It was those upper intellectual strata, novelists, playwrights, stage and film directors who, fascinated by the violence of their imagined picture of the *lumpenproletariat*, turned that violence into a vogue, who made *chic* the whole paraphernalia of petty perversion, who made easily available and socially acceptable such writers as de Sade, whose works had previously been more or less confined to special readership.

Convinced that this climate of opinion had an influence on the Moors murders, she asks the question: "What price would we pay to prevent the torture of one helpless child? The price of restricting art? I don't answer the question. I simply ask it."

Unfortunately, Miss Hansford Johnson somewhat diminishes the force of her question by confusing it with the far wider one of whether the general permissiveness of our society is not a symptom of its moral, social, and intellectual decline. "Permissiveness," as she uses it, becomes a pejorative word; if she substituted "freedom" for it, the question would have a slightly different look.

In the particular case of the Moors murders, however, she seems to me to be on firmer ground. Brady possessed a large and varied library of pornography, including, among other sadistic works, *Justine*. Whether or not they directly inspired his crimes, it is quite clear from his own evidence that they profoundly affected his feelings, his ideas, and his attitude to life, and it seems somehow wrongheaded to assume that these feelings, ideas, and attitudes did not in fact influence his actions, and in particular his crimes. It is interesting that Brady himself made no such assumption. Over a long period he tried to educate his brother-in-law in the delights of sadism and to make him a partner in his crimes, just as he made Myra Hindley, and as part of this course of indoctrination he lent him *Justine*, as a tutor might lend a pupil a textbook. Given the facts of the case, and Brady's own evidence, it seems to me highly unlikely that *Justine*, which offers a philosophical defence of all the horrors Brady committed, did not influence his actions in the most direct and practical way.

Thus Miss Hansford Johnson's question, "What price would we pay to prevent the torturing of one helpless child?" is really a very awkward one for those who believe, as I do, that any form of censorship is in itself to be deplored. It demands serious consideration and the avowed intention of Miss Hansford Johnson's book is to provoke public discussion of it. In this she has had some success and it has been extremely illuminating to study some of the replies her question has received.

FOR INSTANCE, Bernard Levin tells us that Miss Hansford Johnson, and her book are silly, dogmatic, ignorant, and self-contradictory. She confuses Ravaillac with Damien and Henri Quatre with Louis XIV; moreover, she does not seem to be aware that psychologists have done important research to see if there is a link between "sado-pornographic *reading* and similar *doing*." Unfortunately, Mr. Levin does not tell us who conducted these researches or what their results were; he implies, however, that they would not be favourable to Miss Hansford Johnson's case.

One might fairly call Mr. Levin's article an evasion rather than an answer. And in this, I think, he is being rather less honest and frank than usual. I do not think, for instance, that he would have written in the same way if Miss Hansford Johnson had been discussing the relation between reading and doing with reference, not to de Sade and the Moors murder, but, let us say, to *Der Stürmer* and the persecution of the Jews in Germany. Would he, in such a case, place much faith in "serious psychological researches," if they assured him that a reading

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of *Der Stürmer* had no practical effect on those who carried out its sadistic recommendations. I believe he would not, and would prefer, rightly, to trust his own humanity, capacity for moral indignation, and common sense.

ONE MIGHT find a similar kind of evasion in an article in the *Sunday Times* by J. W. Lambert. Mr. Lambert was not directly concerned with *On Iniquity* but with the question of censorship in general which, he tells us, is "amid the usual flurry of cant . . . coming to the boil again," and in particular in the "socially all-important field of the arts." I don't quite know what Mr. Lambert means by describing the arts as "socially all-important," unless of course he simply means that today the arts are as *chic* as the *Sunday Times* and Lord Snowdon can make them. The arts are all-important, if they really are so, for their own sakes, and not for the social implications, and if "socially" is meant at all seriously, I can think of several things which are more important, like housing, or health, or education.

Being socially all-important, the arts, for Mr. Lambert, deserve their freedom, and this freedom should be unrestricted by any form of official censorship. For this conclusion he offers a curious argument; which is that censorship has already been so far relaxed that it might now be just as well abolished altogether for any harm that would be done. The market for sadism and eroticism is, he implies, already sated, its commercial possibilities have been fully exploited, we are so gorged with pornography, it seems, that we can take no more, and can safely do away with the remains of that curious jumble of legal restrictions, historical anomalies, and self-imposed regulation which makes up our present system of censorship. As for the Moors murders, that was an extreme case; but if it is thought to exhibit the power of literature to deprave and corrupt, we must accept that this is also true of some 60 or 70 per cent of today's fiction.

Mr. Lambert's argument is such an odd one that he himself seems hardly happy at its conclusion, as if he had laid an egg of the wrong shape. For in the end he tells us that the ideal is that we should all exercise "self-censorship" and have some faith in ourselves. I must confess that I haven't the slightest notion what this means, and in any case it is hard to resist the temptation to reply: tell that to Brady.

MR. LAMBERT DOES NOT seriously consider the implications of the Moors murders. Philip Toynbee, in the *Observer*, does, and returns an unequivocal answer to Miss Hansford Johnson's question. "If it can be shown or even very strongly suspected that a particular book or play will lead to a single sadistic murder, then that book or play should if possible be suppressed." This is clear enough; on the other hand, Mr. Toynbee feels that "direct censorship is by now an almost useless means of dealing with anything" and fears that sadistic books, if suppressed, might well become an illegitimate industry, like bootleg liquor. On this view, publishers of pornographic books should support the censorship, as bootleggers supported Prohibition; I don't think Mr. Girodias feels like that. All the same it doesn't seem to leave us with any weapons with which to protect children for whom we might fear the fate of Lesley Ann Downey. Mr. Toynbee's own solution is more and better education, not because it makes people morally better but because it makes life more interesting. Mr. Toynbee may, in the long run, be right; but as Keynes said, in the long run we are all dead, some of us by unpleasant means, and what Miss Hansford Johnson is asking is what we can or should do now.

The *Times Literary Supplement* is more afraid of what may happen if *On Iniquity* falls into the wrong hands than what may happen to a Lesley Ann Downey; just as *Justine* may stimulate a Brady, so may *On Iniquity* stimulate a Captain Robert Maxwell. It accuses Miss Hansford Johnson, and Mr. George Steiner, who last year made much the same case as hers, of failing to realise that any steps taken to prevent books falling into the wrong hands, that is to say, hands quick to use the whip, the bludgeon, or the axe as instruments of sexual pleasure, may also be used to prevent masterpieces falling into good ones, and employed against literature as well as pornography. The *T.L.S.* appears to regard this as a crushing argument, but in effect it is no answer at all either to Miss Hansford Johnson or Mr. Steiner. For if life really does imitate art, and if even art may lead to such scenes as were enacted on the Moors, should we not still ask, as Miss Hansford Johnson does, whether this is not too high a price to pay for such models?

It is always easy to be unfair in summarising the arguments of others; we don't handle them with the same loving care as we do our own. I hope I have not been guilty of this in what I have written. But I cannot help feeling that both *On Iniquity* and its critical reception illustrate the extraordinary confusion which surrounds all our ideas about censorship at the present time and how much we are in need of a thorough and comprehensive study of the subject, both in its factual aspect and in its theoretical implications. Such a study, I think, would have to begin with an examination of

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the relation betwen literature and the arts and life, and here Mr. Levin's "serious psychological researches" might really be of value. For in fact we know extraordinarily little about the subject, and until we know more we shall not, I feel, make much progress towards achieving a more rational view of what purposes, if any, censorship should or can achieve. I hope that perhaps *On Iniquity* may stimulate someone to undertake such a study. If it does, I for one would feel grateful and would feel also that Miss Hansford Johnson had performed a valuable public service.

*

THE *Times* under its new management has now been with us long enough to justify at least a provisional judgment on the changes that have taken place both in its form and its content. I am afraid that in my own case this would not be a favourable one but then I don't suppose I am the sort of reader Lord Thomson's management team has its eyes on. After all, I have read *The Times* for as long as I can remember, with strangely ambivalent feelings of love and hate, and I suppose I shall go on doing so as long as I live, if only for the crossword. I am a part of the captive audience Lord Thomson acquired when he bought the paper; it's those who don't buy it whom he's chiefly interested in at the moment.

Once, for six unhappy months, I even worked on *The Times*, during that period in the 1930s when, under Geoffrey Dawson, it plumbed those depths of political dishonesty which are so incisively analysed by Stanley Morrison in his supplement to the official history of the paper. I don't suppose anything quite like that will happen under the new régime; Lord Thomson's brilliant insight that as a Conservative he should support the Labour Government will serve well enough as a guide to editorial policy. On the other hand, it is possible that in its new form *The Times* may lose some of the virtues which it still retained even under Dawson.

One, though it may appear a very minor one, was the almost inordinate amount of labour and knowledge which was devoted to verifying the factual accuracy of its contents, wherever such verification was possible. This work was done in the sub-editors' room, where I once sat, in a seat recently vacated by Graham Greene, surrounded by men who looked and behaved as if they would have been more at home in an Oxford common room than a newspaper office. There we wrestled with all the problems of fact presented by any news story as if we were Housman editing a classical text; and the habit of accuracy which was acquired there had an influence which extended far outside *The Times* itself, because so many of those who served their apprenticeship in the sub-editors' room later departed for other newspaper offices in which they tried to apply the same standards they had learned in Printing House Square.

I fear that this tradition may now have come to an end. The other day *The Times* printed a story, from Germany, from which it was clear that no one in the office knew the difference between the *S.P.D.* and the *N.P.D.*, a small alphabetical error which involves all the difference between social-democracy and neo-Nazism. The confusion was made all the more glaring because it was crystallised and consecrated in a headline. I think it is fair to say that this would once have been impossible; it would have been impossible that the sub-editor concerned could have made such an error; it would have been impossible that it should have passed the chief sub-editor; it would have been impossible that it should have passed the long process of checking that went on before *The Times* finally appeared on the street. And if it had ever occurred, the day would have been remembered in the sub-editors' room as a day of shame and disaster.

But perhaps such an incident does not matter, because it seems fairly clear now that what we are to have in *The Times* is not news but views, not measures but men; that is to say, not a record of what has happened but what *The Times* thinks about it, not an objective account and analysis of events and politics but vivid, all-too-vivid portraits of the personalities responsible for them. It is hardly necessary for *The Times* to have a leader page any more because in all its columns fact is so inextricably mingled with opinion that it is hard to say whether one is reading a leader, a news story, or a letter. And the cult of personality has gone so far that it seems to have infected its own staff; signed articles may be a justifiable departure from *The Times'* tradition of anonymity; I am by no means so sure about the tiny gnome-like faces of Ian Trethowan, Clive Irving, David Woods, *et al.*, which now peer at us out of its columns as from some dwarf's television screen. Equally, I am sure that the new régime is right in trying to remove the last traces of that oppressively masculine odour which once pervaded the pages of the paper; but again I am not sure they haven't gone too far when Monday-Merry-Go-Round, which is almost as oppressively feminine, encourages me to "jazz up" my fridge or my lavatory seat with attractive plastic decorations.

PERHAPS ALL THESE THINGS can be put down to teething troubles. It is not an easy thing to re-

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design a newspaper, especially one as resistant to change, and with as square a readership, as *The Times*. No doubt *The Times* will succeed in finding a style and a voice as distinctive, under new conditions, as any of those which it ever possessed in the past. What slightly dismays me is that, to judge both by the present form and content of the paper, and from Mr. Clive Irving's comments, *The Times* is now wedded to the same formula for success which has been applied so effectively by the *Sunday Times*. This formula is based on the belief that the new managerial class which has been produced by our schools and universities since the War demands of the press, not news, but an entire cultural and sociological background which will enable it to keep up with the world and the Armstrong-Joneses. That, no doubt, is why we need advice on jazzing up the fridge and the lavatory seat. It is also based on the belief that television has largely usurped the place of the press as a medium for disseminating the latest news. The success of the *Sunday Times*, from the point of view of circulation seems to indicate that the formula is correct; but I very much doubt whether the same success can be achieved by applying the formula unchanged to a daily newspaper. In any case, I think it would mean the death of *The Times* as a newspaper even remotely resembling what it has hitherto been. Whether that is a matter for regret or rejoicing is very much a matter of opinion.

R

Two Love Poems

Brilliant Flowers on a White Plate, at Breakfast

Duncovitch the philosopher
Lived in a barrel throughout winter,
In spring and summer was head waiter,
Entered town—crying "Marmalada!"
Laid on your plate alone—quite right,
Since you were like a picture—purple
Curved anthers of the Caper.

Grotto, and Recollection

I swam from you through the grotto, it was not cold,
Under its black roof to the far rock, wrote
On the rock your initial with my finger,
Swam back to you: your small
Stiff nipples I remember.

Geoffrey Grigson

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THEATRE

Legal Occasions

By John Weightman

THERE ARE, as the French say, *des titres prédestinés*. When three plays entitled respectively *The Burglar*, *Loot*, and *The Judge* are running at the same time, it seems obvious that one should compare them to see how the great questions of crime and punishment are being handled on the contemporary stage. However, I had no sooner noticed that *The Burglar* was on than I had to hurry to see it before it came off—"killed by the critics," as the producer complained, referring to that widely publicised criminal phenomenon of our day, aesthetic assassination by the non-creative wielders of the pen. Belonging to this criminal category myself, at least on a part-time basis, I should have felt jealous of my colleagues who got in first and stabbed Miss Brophy's play to death, before I had had a chance to tear it to shreds. Dramatic criticism has its disappointing moments; sometimes the limbs have been severed and the blood has been drunk before one has even reached one's seat in the stalls, and so one sits there, full of murderous longings that nothing can assuage. But it so happens that I have a sneaking fondness for Miss Brophy, since I have so often watched her being outrageous on the television screen at the foot of my bed. I therefore made a noble gesture on her behalf, "At least," I said loudly to my campanion, "this is better than *Barefoot in the Park*." The remark, I must report, produced a hostile reaction from the American ladies around us (there are always American ladies around in the London theatre), who seemed to think that I had spoken lightly of one of their valuable national products.

But although *The Burglar* is better than *Barefoot in the Park*, could we not "do without it," to borrow a phrase Miss Brophy herself has applied to some traditionally admired masterpieces? I should think we might. To be quite frank, as regards their basic structure, I think we could do without *The Judge* and *Loot* as well, because the first thing that strikes one about all three plays is that they remind one of other plays by other playwrights. *The Burglar* has a central character who comes straight out of Shaw and four other characters who have been to school with Wilde and Gide (or have breathed in fashionable amoralism from the surrounding air). Mr. John Mortimer's *The Judge* looks like Dürrenmatt's *Visit* turned round about; instead of the famous actress coming back to her home-town to take revenge on the man who bespoiled her in youth, a man, at the end of a successful legal career, comes back to his home town to punish himself for his supposed seduction of a young girl. In *Loot*, we have a corpse on the stage as in Ionesco's *Amédée*, and inconsequential dialogue and music-hall tricks, as in Ionesco, Beckett, Pinter and N. F. Simpson. All three works, then, are imitative and approximately to the same degree, although their stage fortunes have been diverse. *The Burglar* was taken off after a fortnight; *The Judge* is still running after one or two hostile notices and a mild *succès d'estime*; *Loot* has been going strong for months and was given the "Best Play of the Year" award by the *Evening Standard*. According to that newspaper, the author, Mr. Joe Orton, who once served a prison sentence for housebreaking, and who is therefore perhaps not altogether unlike Miss Brophy's central character, is enjoying a holiday in the southern sun—that sun which is longed for so nostalgically by the few artistic characters shut up in the northern English city where the sombre action of Mr. Mortimer's play is set. There seems to be some moral here. *The Burglar* and *The Judge* are articulate, argumentative plays written by middle-class intellectuals; *Loot* is an inconsequential extravaganza written by a non-intellectual, or at least by some one who is not intellectual or middle-class in the same way. All three are imitative, yet only the last one has been a commercial and artistic successs. I think we have to conclude either that there is something wrong with Miss Brophy's and Mr. Mortimer's arguments, or that at the moment the public and the critics

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simply prefer the titillations of the Absurd to the presentation of a coherent point of view.

I SAY "TITILLATIONS" because I cannot sense the existence, behind the action of *Loot*, of those philosophical or metaphysical intimations which give seriousness to Beckett and Ionesco. I remember laughing occasionally, but I cannot now remember any of the jokes, and this makes me think that they cannot have had much organic relationship with the "plot," such as it is. Perhaps the central idea is that nothing whatever is to be taken seriously. The entertainment is performed in a lower-middle-class parlour, where the embalmed corpse of Mother is laid out in preparation for the funeral. She has been poisoned by the Nurse, a professional murderess, who is proposing to marry Father for his savings. The delinquent, bisexual son, along with his friend, the undertaker's assistant (the Nurse's current lover), has robbed a bank and hidden the money in the wardrobe. The case is being investigated by a Comic Police Officer, who is also corrupt. After a lot of to-ing and fro-ing, during which the corpse, its glass eyes rolling and its false teeth snapping, is lugged from coffin to wardrobe and from wardrobe to bed, and generally passed around like a rugby-ball, immorality triumphs. The Police Officer accepts his cut of the loot and Father, the only innocent character, is dragged off to justice. If there is an overall significance, it must be that life is a merry prank for the wholly naughty and that the well-meaning stupid take the blame; at the same time, a corpse is a corpse, *gaudeamus igitur*.

Mr. Orton has here the elements of an impressive black comedy, but to my mind it never quite takes shape as one would like it to. Mr. Michael Bates, as the Police Officer, romps away with the action, building up the sinister/grotesque character with a wealth of wordless stage business. The Son is also marvellously portrayed, with that curious, appealing blankness that so many young people have nowadays, as if God had forgotten to provide them with souls and they were vaguely conscious of a certain lack. But the Nurse is machine-made and Father is a bore. Only occasionally do the different elements cohere into a true farce; mostly they remain apart as disjointed gimmicks.

THE WICKED POLICEMAN is the pillar of Mr. Orton's play; a virtuous burglar carries the whole weight of Miss Brophy's. Mr. Jim Dale gives a stunning performance, whining and assertive, puny yet athletic. The pity of it is that he is two or three generations behind the times. There may still be a few puritanical, W.E.A. burglars, full of anti-middle-class indignation, and ready to be incensed by the loose sexual behaviour of their social superiors. But they must be so rare that they cannot even be used as a convenient device for the making of jokes. The tone of such non-middle-class writing as we have—Mr. Orton's play, Frank Norman's autobiographical pieces, Bill Naughton's Alfie saga—is anything but prim. I am not saying that all working-class or lower middle-class people would not bat an eyelid at the behaviour of Miss Brophy's adulterous middle-class couple, who look upon the satisfaction of a passing whim as a duty to oneself and as a way of weeding out those unsatisfied desires which may threaten the harmony of married life. But I doubt whether they would be aggressively moral about it. Miss Brophy strikes me as being very bold about something that no longer calls for such boldness. Perhaps she hasn't seen *There's a Girl in my Soup* or the average television play. The better bits of her dialogue occur between the four middle-class characters, when they are querulously trying to work out if they feel anything serious or interesting about sex or not. I think Miss Brophy could produce a successful comedy of manners, if she developed this element and abandoned the creaking device of class comparison.

Mr. Mortimer's play is self-confessedly old-fashioned. Judges are always, by definition, two or three generations out of date and, in any case, Mr. Mortimer, who is a barrister by profession, has said that he was thinking of certain judges he knew at the beginning of his career. I can remember one or two I have sat under as a juryman and who had the apoplectic crustiness and coarse insistence that Mr. Patrick Wymark brings to the part. I find it more difficult to imagine them being eaten up by a secret guilt to the extent of going back, on the verge of retirement, to have a nervous breakdown in their native city, especially when, for years, they have been paying a pension to the woman they had supposedly ruined. In himself, Mr. Wymark, as a rumbustious, Churchillian figure, was credible enough. But would he, in England, be able to bully his old school pals into coming to dinner and singing their boyhood songs with him? Would he be able to browbeat them so that they printed certain loaded articles in the local newspaper? Would the populace stone an antique shop where some slightly immoral happenings are suspected of taking place? Are there still local Bohemian ladies in semi-peasant costume longing for the warm South or la rue du Bac or "les-z-Halles," as Irina longs for Moscow in *The Three Sisters*? Miss Patience Collier almost makes the part con-

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vincing as she flounces about among the bric-à-brac, looking for a "ciggy." Almost, but not quite; one is never involved because, apart from a phrase or two, this doesn't seem to be a dramatic transposition of actual English experience. It is an exercise in the theatreland of half-remembered Continental drama, as if the words had been well-translated and the revolving stage were the latest German import. The town and the notables and the overhanging problem loom and gloom in a slightly foreign way. We may still all be a prey to guilt and nostalgia, but according to what my antennae tell me, they don't operate quite like this. *The Judge* can be enjoyed as good, square theatre, if you forget about contemporary English life.

A Working Holiday

(*For Colin Middleton*)

Water through the window, the light and shade
Fill up my head once more as I distil
All that sunshine in the glass of lemonade
John left overnight on the windowsill.

And though it was the far end of my teens
I can hear him ringing bells, hear his shout—
Though my Greek's now locked in the past tense
Down the long corridors I just make out

Our classics master—"very eccentric"—
Breaking the dreams of our three weeks' stay
To get us up for breakfast and for Greek
"Because this is a working holiday."

Into the back of my mind it all fits—
The house by the lake, Mrs Quirk
—The Keeper of the Two Colossal Tits—
Who came in to cook and do the housework.

The scholarly boy we all misunderstood,
His voice breaking, ahead of us a year,
Buck teeth champing the subjunctive mood.
His nickname was LAGOS—the Greek for HARE.

David swam naked in the pouring rain,
His foreskin like a turkey's wattle.
John's glass eye a shard of porcelain—
My comrades, in the morning doing battle

With the Greek New Testament again—Acts
Of the Apostles—each of us a warden
Of views beyond our books which now contract
To Mrs Quirk by lunchtime in the garden

Gliding towards us like a huge balloon,
Behind her the water where the boat was—
The old boat which, even that afternoon,
Would be too frail to stomach all of us.

Michael Longley

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NOTES & TOPICS

Pieter Geyl

PIETER GEYL (1887–1967) was a very eminent historian, and his family and fellow-countrymen, and his friends and colleagues all over the world, who are now grieving for the loss of a much-loved mortal man, can find at least some consolation in the certainty that he is still living, and will long continue to live, in his published works. Geyl's *magnum opus* is his history of the Dutch-Flemish-speaking people/peoples. Singular or plural? This is not only an academic question; it is a political one too; and Geyl took it up in its political aspect with the same ardour that he put into his historical treatment of it.

Unfortunately Geyl did not live to finish this work, which is great in its scope and time-span as well as in its intellectual distinction. Moreover, a large part of those instalments of it that had been finished and published before the author's death are still accessible only in his mother-tongue. I have not written "native tongue," because Geyl had two native tongues; he was virtually as much at home in English as he was in Dutch; he was, in fact, bilingual.

Of course, in Holland, the mastery of several foreign languages is a more common feat than it is in most countries, though the Scandinavians are not far behind the Dutch in this accomplishment. The incentive, in both cases, has been the same; neither Dutch nor any of the Scandinavian languages is a world-language. But, while none of the Scandinavian languages has ever had world-wide currency, Dutch has been a world-language once. In the 17th century it was spoken in the Sloboda suburb of Moscow and on Deshima Island off Nagasaki, and it was the *lingua franca* in which Russians and Japanese, as well as Indonesians, communicated with the Western World. In that century, Dutch seemed as sure of continuing to be current round the globe, from Nagasaki to New Amsterdam, as, at the beginning of the Christian Era, Greek seemed certain to continue to hold the field, from India to Britain, as the language of international commerce and culture. However, history never ceases to disappoint expectations. On my first visit to the Netherlands, a member of the Foreign Service told me, with a wry smile, that a party of Javanese "regents" (notables), who had just arrived in Holland after having travelled across Asia and Europe, had told him what a comfort it had been to them, upon entering Holland, at last to hear "the World language" being spoken again.

Fortunately for non-Dutch-reading readers of English, an English version of one of the most interesting parts of Geyl's monumental history has been accessible to us since 1932, under the title *The Revolt of the Netherlands* (*1555–1609*). It is a version, not just a translation, for it was written in English by Geyl himself, and Geyl was not the man to repeat himself mechanically. New thoughts would well up in his mind while the ink was flowing from his pen.

THIS PERIOD in the history of the Low Countries is interesting for more reasons than one. It was the period in which the political unity of the Low Countries broke up—never to be re-established except during the fifteen years 1815–1830. The partial (but only partial) success of the revolt against the Spanish branch of the Habsburg Dynasty that started in 1566 undid the Burgundian Dynasty's patient work of territorial expansion in this quarter which had begun with their acquisition of the County of Flanders in 1378 and had been completed by the Burgundians' first Habsburg successor, Charles V, when he had conquered Gelderland in 1543. Concurrently with the war between the insurgents and the Spanish Crown, there was a two-way internal migration in the Low Countries between the south and the north of the region in which the Dutch-Flemish language was, and is, spoken. Calvinist southerners migrated to the northern provinces that had succeeded in liberating themselves from Spanish rule, while Catholic northerners migrated to those southern provinces that had been successfully retained by foreign rulers who were these northern *émigrés*' co-religionists. At the same time the preponderance of power—economic, military, and political—passed to the North, now politically independent, from the South, which had previously overshadowed the North since the early Middle Ages. The new northern sovereign state assumed the arrogant misnomer of "The United Netherlands." The South did not recover even parity with the North until, in 1830, the South, in its turn, at last won its political independence under the name of Belgium, and then rapidly followed up this political achievement by the economic one of arriving second to Britain alone in accomplishing the industrial revolution.

The period covered by Geyl's *The Revolt of the Netherlands* is, thus, the crucial one in the history of the Low Countries, and Geyl's treatment of the subject in this book is characteristically brilliant. Here he has made an old story new by setting it in a new light. For instance, he brings to light the "geo-political" and

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the military and naval factors that caused the Low Countries to split along the historic line, a line that bore no relation to the linguistic frontier between the Dutch-Flemish and the French language. He also brings out the importance of the part played by the Protestant *émigrés* from Flanders in building up the new Dutch nation—and this in both the economic and the cultural field. Flanders itself now wilted, but Flemings continued to play a major part in the life of the Western World as settlers in the independent Protestant North. In becoming not only citizens, but fully assimilated and highly influential citizens, of the newly established northern independent state, the 16th-century Protestant Flemish *émigrés* were emulating the feats of their medieval ancestors, who had sent forth swarms of pioneer settlers, eastwards and westwards, to play a leading part in opening up and civilising northern Europe from East Prussia in one direction to Pembrokeshire in the other.

GEYL'S HISTORY of the Dutch-Flemish-speaking peoples is only one—though, undoubtedly the most important single one—of his creative historical works. Even if he had never started to write this unfinished book, and had therefore also never written an English version of one particularly interesting part of it, he would have made his mark as an historian by his *Napoleon: For and Against*. This book of Geyl's is interesting, not only as an important contribution to historical knowledge and understanding, but as a searchlight that reveals Geyl's personality. Geyl was a born fighter—his pugnacity was insatiable and irrepressible. He would fight on any field that offered itself, and, in this book, he was fighting on two fields at once—the military and the academic. Geyl's *Napoleon* was written, under fantastically adverse conditions, in a Nazi concentration camp during Hitler's occupation of the Netherlands in World War II. (Geyl also found time, within those five years, to play a vigorous part in the tough Dutch resistance movement.) The subject of Geyl's *Napoleon* was equally characteristic of the author. The book is a discussion of the controversies over Napoleon among historians. Academic controversy was a form of warfare that Geyl found irresistibly attractive. In his *Napoleon*, he is writing the history of other historians' conflicting opinions and pronouncements. It is surprising that he formulated the sub-title *For and Against*, instead of the other way round; for he took much more delight in engaging in controversy himself than in just recording the engagements of other academic combatants; and, as a controversialist in his own person, he loved to take the offensive. At any rate, he played *con* far more often than he played *pro*.

As a critic he had a gift that, in this line of intellectual work, is all too rare. It was a spiritual gift, as distinct from his intellectual gifts. In his academic warfare, Geyl could, and did, hit out at his human targets with all his might, but this always without any touch of malice or uncharitableness. Hence, even his most provocative and most telling criticisms did not arouse his living target's resentment, and therefore did not close one's mind against pondering over, and profiting by, Geyl's strictures on one's own work. The profit could be proportionate to Geyl's outstanding intellectual powers, which he applied, not only to his creative work, but to his critical work too. I speak from experience; for I was one of Geyl's favourite targets, and I offered a broad exposure of hide to the pellets from his quick-firing shot-gun. I can testify that I received from Geyl a life-long course of adult education, without this ever impairing a life-long friendship with him and affection for him.

GEYL'S RUNNING FIRE kept my mind as spry as a herring is so long as it has a catfish to chase it. It was largely thanks to Geyl that I was able to cap a large book of my own (I have been luckier than Geyl was in living to finish an *oeuvre de longue haleine*) with a supplementary volume of "Reconsiderations"; and this is a volume that I am particularly glad to have produced. The preparatory work was depressing. I had to reread and digest Geyl's and my numerous lesser opponents' criticisms. The effect was like putting oneself on a many-months-long diet of weed-killer. But, when I came to the positive part of the job, which was to consider and frankly declare how far I felt impelled to change my own views in the light of the counter-views put forward by my critics, I found this exercise rewardingly stimulating. The title of one of Geyl's works—*Debates with Historians*—would have served equally well for my *Reconsiderations*—though my debates, as far as I can judge, are less combative and therefore probably also less vivacious. Anyway, Geyl and his fellow critics have ensured for me that my mind shall keep on the move, instead of falling into the pitfall of defending its own past acts. For an historian, as for any other kind of creative worker, it is intellectual death to say "What I have written I have written" (though there may have been something to be said for this dictum when it was uttered originally by an irritated administrator).

Thus I happen to be still more indebted to Geyl the acute critic than I am to Geyl the constructive historian. Yet, being an historian myself, and also being Geyl's friend and admirer,

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I regret that Geyl expended so much of his time and energy on his series of academic commando raids that he failed to finish his far more important *magnum opus*. Geyl squandered too much of his intellectual wealth in scattering it abroad in small change, and this was a strategic error. In intellectual work, as in work of most other kinds, one condition for success is the ability to lay out, to the best advantage, the short span of a human being's working life-time between infancy and death (or, worse than death itself, prae-mortem senility). This mastery of the art of logistics on the life-time scale is particularly important for an intellectual worker who is an historian; for an historian, unlike a mathematician or a poet, can do with all the effective working time that Nature is willing to give him, and therefore he is, far more than they are, at the mercy of Nature's heartless caprice.

I WILL CLOSE this short and sketchy appreciation of Geyl with a tease which would, I fancy, have given him, if he were still alive, the satisfaction of being offered yet another chance of engaging in an enjoyable tilting-match. Geyl's genius was, as I have tried to bring out, in most ways both individual and pugnacious. He himself was aware of these two qualities in him, and both qualities gave him pleasure. The situation in which Geyl most enjoyed finding himself was that of the lone wolf provoking a pack of hounds into counter-attacking him. For instance, in politics he was perhaps the sole representative of Pan-Netherlanderism: a programme for re-uniting Holland with the Flemish-speaking half of Belgium. He once told me—and this, I think, in earnest, and not as a joke—that one of the things that he liked about being a Pan-Netherlander was that the programme not only incensed the Walloons, but also annoyed both the Flemings and the Dutch. Yet, paradoxically, this would-be solitary warrior was nevertheless a conformist to the prevailing fashion among Western historians of his generation, and this on three points that are none of them unimportant. I am certain of this, because my opposite views on these points were three of the offences enumerated on the charge-sheet of Geyl's indictment of me.

Point One: Geyl's historical interests, multiple though they were, were almost all confined within the horizon of the Western civilisation's history. For Geyl, this, counting the Graeco-Roman civilisation as being an integral part of it, was the only genuine civilisation that there had ever been. Geyl charged me with being guilty of high treason to the West for holding, as I do hold, that the Graeco-Roman civilisation and its Western successor were just two specimens of their species, and that the Western civilisation's recent predominance in the World is likely to prove to have been an ephemeral, and, perhaps, even insignificant episode in the tale of 2000 million years that is the astronomers' estimate of mankind's expectation of life on this planet.

Geyl was also a typical representative of his generation of academic workers in holding that the study of human nature and experience and actions ought to be carved up into a number of separate "disciplines," and that a failure—or, worse, a deliberate refusal—to keep these "disciplines" insulated from each other in water-tight compartments is culpably unprofessional. The second item on his charge sheet was that I deliberately mixed the "disciplines" up.

The third of Geyl's uncharacteristically conventional tenets was that, of all the non-historical disciplines, philosophy is the one that it is most incumbent on an historian to eschew. I do not think that I am misrepresenting Geyl in attributing to him, and assuming that he took this for granted, the doctrine that an historian ceases to be a true one if he allows his mind to reflect on the nature of human thought and on its mode of operation when its object is human history. Geyl was, I should say, an un-self-critical believer in the attainability of Ranke's naïve objective of writing history, without more ado, *wie es eigentlich gewesen ist*: *i.e.* in accordance with the facts, the whole of the facts, and nothing but the facts—as if those five words were not resonant with the whole gamut of the branch of philosophy called epistemology. Geyl's third count against me was that, in philosophising, I was implicitly pleading guilty to the charge of being not an historian—whatever might be the chimerical classification, if any, into which I would fit.

Here, I think, Geyl the fighting-man missed an obvious golden opportunity. If, instead of continuing tamely to serve as leading counsel for the prosecution, he had stepped melodramatically into the dock to stand there side by side with me, he could have played the part of Julian the Apostate with an incomparable truculence, and this would have at least decupled the scale of his intellectual warfare—lading him (in Buddhist terms) with a load of *karma* that would have sufficed to keep him out of *Nirvana* for at least a dozen future re-incarnations.

However, on the three points that I have mentioned, Geyl was—indisputably, I should say—a surprisingly conventional representative of the majority of contemporary historians. How wildly this horrid imputation of orthodoxy would have infuriated him! How swiftly and

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vehemently he would have retorted! Alas, he is no longer here to answer back in his inimitable style. If, nevertheless, I allow myself this parting tease in my long boxing (or was it only shadow-boxing?) match with an old and dear friend, it is because I have learnt from him to tease without malice. The lesson is one of Geyl's legacies to all his *confrères*—a moral legacy that is as precious, in its own domain, as his intellectual *magnum opus*.

Arnold J. Toynbee

International Commentary

Arguing About the Cold War

A Balance Sheet — By HANS J. MORGENTHAU

IN THE summer of 1965, Mr. Robert M. Hutchins (President of the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions and former President of the University of Chicago) issued *A Declaration to End the Cold War* which started thus:

> I propose to ask the President of the United States to make the following statement at the next session of the General Assembly of the United Nations: "I hereby declare the Cold War is over. . . ."

There is something engaging in the neat precision of this proposal: the captain of a football team blowing the whistle because he thinks that the time has come to quit. However, the practicality of this proposal to end the Cold War is predicated upon a particular assumption concerning its origin. The President of the United States would indeed have it in his power to end the Cold War by unilateral declaration if the Cold War had started by such a declaration on his part. Yet nobody would seriously argue that it was as a result of someone's conscious decision. Quite the contrary, it is generally recognised that it grew out of a series of circumstances and policies whose cumulative effects imperceptibly brought to the fore those irreconcilable interests and hostile policies associated with "Cold War."

What distinguishes the Cold War from the many hostile confrontations history records (and, hence, justifies its name) are two factors: the impossibility for all concerned, given the interests at stake and the positions taken, to pursue conciliatory policies which through the instruments of give-and-take and compromise might have led to a settlement of the outstanding issues; and the necessity (following from this impossibility) for all concerned to protect and promote their interests through unilateral direct pressure on the opponent's will by all means available—diplomatic, military, economic, subversive—short of the actual use of force. Thus, we have been in a "war" because the purpose of all concerned was not to accommodate the other side in return for accommodation on its part, but rather to compel the other side to yield. "Roll-back" and "liberation" are terms of war which imply not an agreed-upon accommodation but unilateral action. The threat of military force, if the other side should not yield its position in West Berlin, partakes of the same characteristic. But while both sides have used the techniques of war rather than diplomacy to achieve their ends, they have been very careful not to resort to force, at least in their relations with each other. Thus we have been in a "war" in so far as unilateral techniques are the instruments of war and not of diplomacy; and the war has been a "cold" one because the use of force upon a major opponent was excluded from the instruments of unilateral action.

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THE CAUSES OF THIS STATE of affairs have recently become the subject of scholarly controversy in the United States. The official and widely held popular version attributes all responsibility for the Cold War to the policies Joseph Stalin pursued during the last year and in the aftermath of World War II. More particularly, the origin of the Cold War is traced to the Soviet violations of the Yalta agreements. At this point, the official and popular version divides into two schools of thought. There are those who see in Stalin a mere exponent of the unalterable attitudes and objectives of Communism; and there are those who concentrate all the blame on Stalin as a person in contrast to Khrushchev and his successors who are credited with the desire to "make an end to the Cold War." C. B. Marshall's very brief and popular account[1] leans towards the former view while Marshall Schulman's book,[2] primarily policy-oriented, points in the other direction.

Against this view, which has tended to be both a result and an instrument of the Cold War, a two-fold reaction has set in. One has been revisionist and polemical, a kind of counter-foil to the view it opposes in trying to show how much the United States is to blame for the Cold War. D. F. Fleming's massive attack upon the official doctrine[3] is in good measure a Cold-War polemic in reverse, shifting the principal blame from the Soviet Union to the United States. Gar Alperovitz[4] sets himself the more limited task of showing that the atomic bomb was used against Japan not primarily for military reasons but as a political weapon in the confrontation with the Soviet Union.

The other reaction transcends the polemics of the Cold War. It lets the diplomatic record speak for itself, as does Martin Herz,[5] or it assesses the merits and demerits of each side's case with an impressive measure of philosophic detachment, as do John Lukacs[6] and Louis Halle.[7] The record is made particularly eloquent in Mr. Herz's book through the device of seventy-eight questions and answers summarising the conclusions to be drawn from the analysis. Or it seeks to substitute for the enmities and rivalries of traditional power politics an altogether new type of foreign policy aiming at a world community, as does the Barnet-Raskin volume.[8]

Of these books, Louis Halle's is in a class by itself. It not only presents a penetrating account of world politics in the last two decades, but that account is embedded in, and permeated by, a melancholy wisdom that is informed by an awareness of the irremediable folly of mankind, evoking the memory of Thucydides whom Halle is fond of quoting.

The picture of the origins of the Cold War that emerges from these books was already foreshadowed by Walter Lippmann's analysis (*The Cold War*, 1947) and by other earlier accounts, based upon primary sources, by Herbert Feis[9] and William H. McNeill.[10] It is starkly at variance with the official and popular view. Stalin appears not as the adherent of a "rigid theology," to quote Arthur Schlesinger's summary of that view in his recent polemic against Alperovitz,[11] but as a hard-headed realist who thought in the traditional terms of spheres of influence. That conception of the post-war world clashed head-on with Roosevelt's philosophy, most strikingly expressed on 1 March 1945, in his report on the Yalta Conference to Congress:

> The Crimean Conference ... spells the end of the system of unilateral action and exclusive alliances and spheres of influence and balances of power and all the other expedients which have been tried for centuries—and have failed.
>
> We propose to substitute for all these a universal organisation which all peace-loving nations will finally have a chance to join.

It was through this "system of unilateral action ... and all the other expedients" of traditional power politics that Stalin intended to secure Russia's predominance in Eastern Europe.

The incompatibility of these two conceptions of the post-war world came to a head in the controversy over the kind of governments to be established in the nations of Eastern Europe. Stalin insisted that these governments be "friendly." Roosevelt and Churchill conceded that they should be "friendly" to the Soviet

[1] *The Cold War: A Concise History*. By CHARLES BURTON MARSHALL (New York: Franklin Watts, 1965).

[2] *Beyond the Cold War*. By MARSHALL D. SCHULMAN (Yale University Press, 1966).

[3] *The Cold War and Its Origins*. By D. F. FLEMING (Allen & Unwin, 1961).

[4] *Atomic Diplomacy: Hiroshima and Potsdam*. By GAR ALPEROVITZ (Simon & Schuster, 1965).

[5] *Beginnings of the Cold War*. By MARTIN F. HERZ (Indiana University Press, 1966).

[6] *A New History of the Cold War*. By JOHN LUKACS (Doubleday, 1966).

[7] *The Cold War as History*. By LOUIS J. HALLE (Chatto & Windus, 1967).

[8] *After 20 Years: Alternatives to the Cold War in Europe*. By RICHARD J. BARNET and MARCUS S. RASKIN (Random House, 1965).

[9] *Churchill, Roosevelt, Stalin: The War They Waged and the Peace They Sought*. By HERBERT FEIS (Princeton University Press, 1957).

[10] *America, Britain and Russia: Their Co-operation and Conflict, 1941–1946*. By WILLIAM H. MCNEILL (Oxford University Press, 1953).

[11] *New York Review of Books* (20 October 1966).

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Union, but they insisted that they should also be "democratic." Stalin clearly saw the inner contradiction of that position. "A freely elected government in any of these countries," he said, "would be anti-Soviet, and that we cannot allow." Stalin could not help but interpret the Western position as implacable hostility to Russian interests, while the West (mistaking Stalin for Trotsky) saw in the ruthless transformation of the nations of Eastern Europe into Russian satellites empirical proof for the unlimited ambitions of Soviet Communism. Thus the Cold War started. From then on, the issue was no longer whether "spheres of influence" should be abolished or maintained, but how far the sphere of influence of either side should extend. When in the late 1940s Europe had for all practical purposes been firmly divided into two spheres of influence congealing into two military blocs, the Cold War centred upon the concrete political issue as to whether the line of military demarcation of 1945 dividing Germany was to be the definitive boundary between the two spheres, or whether the boundary ought to run further east or west. That issue has remained unresolved to this day.

IN THIS CONTEST, the Soviet Union had two advantages: the Red Army was in physical possession of most of what the Soviet Union claimed to be its sphere of influence, and the Communist parties of Western Europe were at the beck and call of the Soviet Government to support its policies. The West had nothing with which to oppose the Russian sphere of influence except legal and moral complaints about the violations of the Yalta agreements and the rhetoric of German unification, of "liberation" and "roll-back." Against the extension of the Russian sphere it used successfully the weapons of military containment, the Marshall Plan, and the implementation of the Truman doctrine.

The Cold War changed its character drastically under the impact of the hot war in Korea. The North Korean aggression was interpreted by the West as the opening shot in Moscow's campaign for the conquest of the world. It seemed to provide the clinching proof for the assumption held by the West since the beginning of the Cold War that Stalin's foreign policy was in line of succession not to the imperialism of the Tsars but to the world-wide Bolshevik aspirations of Lenin and Trotsky. Mr. Halle stresses correctly the erroneous character of this interpretation, and I have gone even farther in pointing to the element of accident in the Soviet acquiescence in the Northern attempt to unify Korea by force of arms.

The misinterpretation of the North Korean aggression as part of a grand design at world conquest originating in and controlled by Moscow resulted in a drastic militarisation of the Cold War in the form of a conventional and nuclear armaments race, the frantic search for alliances, and the establishment of military bases. This militarisation was both the effect and the cause of the increased expectation that the Cold War might develop into a hot one. That expectation, shared by both sides, in turn increased the likelihood of such a development. As Mr. Halle put it:

> By 1953 the entire foreign policy of the United States... was based on the Cold War. It made sense only on the premises on which the Cold War was being fought. Specifically, the policy was based upon the belief that Moscow was determined, by fraud or violence, to establish its ideology, its political system, and its domination over the entire world.

It is against this background that one must judge the import for the Cold War of Khrushchev's ascent to power. The view is widely held —and Mr. Halle reflects it—that, in terms of the conduct of the Cold War, Khrushchev was an improvement over Stalin; for Khrushchev is supposed to have sought the abatement of the Cold War through what he called "relaxation of tensions." I have never shared this view and can only summarise here the arguments which I presented a decade ago in order to show that Khrushchev changed the quality and increased the range and the intensity of the Cold War but contributed nothing to its abatement. While Stalin conducted a Cold War of position, Khrushchev was the champion of a Cold War of movement. When Khrushchev spoke of relaxation of tensions, he wanted the West to stop challenging the status quo of 1945. In order to force the West to do this, he himself challenged the status quo of West Berlin at the risk of war. But in order to maintain the status quo of the Soviet empire he went to war in Hungary with methods as ruthless as any Stalin had ever used.

However, Khrushchev showed himself as the innovator of the Cold War of movement by making the whole world its theatre and by using new methods of waging it. Here he is the heir not of Stalin and the Tsars, but indeed of Lenin and Trotsky. Khrushchev revived the Bolshevik expectation of the communisation of the whole world as an immediate goal of Soviet foreign policy and made it the basis for a new policy which he called "competitive coexistence" tied to support for "wars of national liberation." His aims were the aims of Lenin and Trotsky; and the methods he used to achieve those aims were his original contribution to the Cold War. These methods run the whole gamut from military intervention and threats to diplomatic

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pressure, foreign aid and trade, support of subversion, and the exploitation of the new technological prestige of the Soviet Union. Thus he threatened war with Great Britain and France over Suez and with the United States over Cuba. He competed with the U.S.A. and China for the allegiance of the new and emerging nations, and he transformed Cuba into a political and military outpost of the Soviet Union. This quantitative and qualitative transformation of the Cold War was the work of Khrushchev not Stalin. It was Stalin, not Khrushchev, who said to Eden that the trouble with Hitler was that he didn't know when to stop: "I know when to stop." Khrushchev did not know it, or he learned it only in 1962.

THE POST-KHRUSHCHEV PHASE of the Cold War is characterised by the extension of movement to the nations of Europe—east and west. In Europe, the aim of Khrushchev's Cold War of movement was identical with that of Stalin's Cold War of position: the stabilisation of the political and territorial status quo of the immediate post-war period. In these two types of Cold War, two blocs opposed each other as political and military instruments of the two super-powers. Now the two tightly controlled blocs have been replaced by traditional alliances of varying closeness. Across what was once the boundary of the two blocs, whose impenetrable proximity was symbolised by the Iron Curtain, the nations of Eastern and Western Europe move in search of new alignments and configurations, putting into question not only the boundary but even the viability of the spheres of influence of the post-war period.

In the course of these movements, unfettered to an ever-increasing degree by the stifling weight of the two super-powers, the natural weights of individual national power have re-asserted themselves. Thus West Germany as the second most powerful nation on the European continent exerts a new attraction upon France, on the one hand, and upon countries like Czechoslovakia and Rumania, on the other. In consequence, East Germany, once the Western spearhead of the Soviet bloc, might well become an island, precariously placed in a moving sea and maintained in that position only as long as the Soviet Union is able and willing to maintain it.

DO THESE DEVELOPMENTS spell the end of the Cold War? There is a tendency to answer that question in the affirmative, not in view of the relevant factors of interests and power in which the Cold War originated and which have kept it going for more than two decades, but in view of a superficial and obsolescent criterion: the degree of hostility exhibited by the United States and the Soviet Union in their relations with each other. From the fact that the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. have not challenged each other openly in recent years in Europe and their diplomatic relations are more nearly normal than they used to be, the conclusion is drawn that there is nothing for them to fight about and that therefore the Cold War has ended. However, the arms race continues, and military bases remain intact. For the Americans and the Russians continue to oppose, and compete with, each other throughout the world. Viet Nam, the Middle East, and Somalia are three spectacular cases in point. According to the *Economist* (19 November 1966):

> The Middle East is one of the parts of the world where Cold War politics are far from dead; Russia and the West have their chosen protégés, and to preserve the balance keep them armed. The resultant arms race is something outsiders ought to get excited, as well as gloomy, about.

In Europe the conflict of interests that has pitted the United States against the Soviet Union since the end of the Second World War persists, even though it has taken on a new appearance. And the question which the Cold War brought to the fore two decades ago remains unanswered: which way is Germany going to turn? Khrushchev saw clearly the crucial importance of that issue and expressed in a number of private conversations his confidence that sooner or later there would be "another Rapallo," *i.e.*, another alignment between the Soviet Union and Germany against the West.

This remains the crucial issue today as it has been for two decades, and it is a matter of secondary importance whether it is going to be fought out through the unilateral methods of the Cold War or through the traditional methods of diplomacy. The answer to that question depends primarily on the policies to be pursued by the Soviet Union. Thus far it has addressed West Germany in the Cold-War language of Stalin and Khrushchev. But how is it going to act? Will it try to protect the remnants of its empire against the attraction of West Germany through the unilateral methods of the Cold War? Or will it try to exchange what is left of that empire for a German-Soviet combination, which might promise to draw all of Europe into its orbit? Or will it use both methods simultaneously, or alternately, as the situation might suggest?

THUS EVEN IF THE Cold War should come to "an end"—and especially if it should—the diplomacy of the West (and, more particularly,

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of the United States) will have to deal with issues infinitely more complex, more risky, and also more promising than those it dealt with successfully during the first two periods of the Cold War. Until now, its main task has been to hold the line, and it has held it. It is an open question whether a less rigid Western diplomacy would have had a chance in 1953 and then again in 1956 to push that line farther east. In any event, from now on, the objective conditions of Europe rather than political rhetoric will pose the question as to where that line should be redrawn and whether there will be a line at all.

It testifies to the power of stereotyped modes of thought and action that none of the books under consideration, with the exception of Mr. Shulman's, addresses itself explicitly to this issue. They are all oriented towards "ending the Cold War" as a good in itself. But under present conditions, that issue concerns the techniques of diplomacy, not its substance. For after the Cold War has ended, the struggle for the substance of power will continue.

Ghana's February Revolution

Sandhurst v. the L.S.E.? — By RITA HINDEN

IN PARTS OF Africa, 1966 has been called "the Soldiers' Year." At its ending the great majority of West Africans—ex-French as well as ex-British—were living under military rule. Earlier, parliamentary democracy had given way almost everywhere to one-party rule, but the politicians were found to be as inept and corrupt under the one-party system as under the democratic experiments. There seemed to be no alternative to the Army taking over, which it did in country after country, usually promising to restore civilian rule "as soon as possible." No one can yet tell when that will be. A spell of military rule may be useful, but whether it will, *of itself*, radically reform public life in these countries and prepare them for a dignified civilian future is quite another matter.

What is one to think of this bitter experience? It is only too easy to conclude either that Africans have no concern for democratic values or else have no capacity for applying them; that only strong-fist rule can make sense of these emerging, but still poor and still weak young states. But a small book recently published[1] leads one to more complicated thoughts.

Colonel Afrifa was one of the young officers who brought about the coup of 24 February 1966 which effectively toppled the Nkrumah régime while the *Asagyefo* was junketing in Peking. He is a Sandhurst product, a passionate devotee of British democratic institutions, staunchly loyal to the backbone to the Ghanaian army, an unflinching patriot of his own country. An unusual African? Perhaps, but how unusual? Less, I suspect, than we have grown accustomed to believe.

The main part of Colonel Afrifa's book is a bitter diatribe against Kwame Nkrumah and the utter demoralisation which he brought about in Ghana. The story is well known: how he was invited back from England in 1947 to lead Ghana's nationalist movement; how he ousted the existing leaders who had summoned him, and by his dynamic personality captured the leadership for himself; how he lit a spark in Ghanaian hearts and how the rush of feeling eventually secured independence in 1957 for this first new state of Africa. But the democratic Independence Constitution which the British had left was subverted by Nkrumah in 1958; by 1960 he had become the unchallenged dictator and the opposition was smashed. What is less well known are the details of the terrible corruption, profligacy, personal cruelty, and mumbo-jumbo that marked the five years of Nkrumahism. An introduction by Tibor Szamuely, who was an "ideological teacher" in Ghana during this period, draws a strong comparison between Nkrumahism and fascism—the attempt to develop a unified ideology, certain "magical beliefs," a certain pseudo-Marxism, totalitarianism, an élitist party "representing a mere extension of the leader's will" —"with a large dose of absurdity and incompetence substituted for the grim reality of Hitlerism. . . ."

Afrifa watched this—certainly not alone—and suffered agonies. He had dreams of quite another kind for the future of his country:

> We want to build a new Ghana, a country ruled by men of integrity and conscience. . . . We

[1] *The Ghana Coup*. By COLONEL A. A. AFRIFA. Frank Cass, 25s.

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> will stand against anything undemocratic.... I cherish the hope that in our country no one man will ever be allowed to lord it over us again. I am a great admirer of the British way of life, its legal system, the Magna Carta, the Petition of Rights and the Bill of Rights.... The British Constitution safeguards not only the rule of law but also the freedom of the press, of thought, of action within the law, and of the individual. It is these things that make Britain the home of democracy.... Liberty comes and lives only where the hard-won rights of men are held inalienable, where governments themselves may not infringe, where governments indeed are but the mechanism to sustain these principles. It was for this concept that we effected the revolution of 24th February....

With thoughts like these in their minds, one can imagine the feelings with which these men watched Nkrumah's antics. "From 1964 every day I considered plans for the removal of Kwame Nkrumah from power," writes Afrifa; finally the fuse was lit when Nkrumah interfered with the Army. In August 1965 the chief of the Defence Staff and his Deputy, Major-General Ankrah (now ruler of Ghana), were arbitrarily dismissed. "The dismissal of our Generals by Kwame Nkrumah was one of the major factors that led to the coup of 24th February. As a result of this action the Ghanaian officers and men felt that the professional men-at-arms had been disgraced and that their Generals as well as they themselves had been humiliated." The soldiers were resentful, too, because Nkrumah established his own Guard Regiment, with higher pay and better equipment than the regular army.

> Because of bad planning, economic mismanagement, and political interference, the Ghana army was rendered incapable, ill-equipped, and had virtually been reduced to a rabble. By Christmas 1965 a number of our troops were without equipment and clothing, things essential for the pride, morale and efficiency of a soldier.... It was shameful to see a Ghanaian soldier in a tattered and ragged uniform, and sometimes without boots during his training period.... The moment they (our troops) started complaining I knew that the days of the Convention People's Party were numbered.

Since his overthrow, little hard news of Nkrumah's doings has trickled through. News has been made, rather, of his misdeeds while still in Ghana—particularly of his extravagance and corruption. Last January a Commission appointed "to enquire into the Kwame Nkrumah Properties" published its report. He was found, at the time of his overthrow, to possess a total of £2,322,000 in cash and property in Ghana (and a considerable sum abroad); most of this was "earned dishonestly." In addition he had received large sums of public money for his services, and public funds destined for the "Contingency Vote" were in fact also appropriated by him for personal purposes (including, fantastically, payment for the import of drinking water which he insisted on bringing from overseas). And all the time Ghana was falling deeper and deeper into debt. On Independence it had inherited a reserve of some £190m.; at the end of 1966 the country had external debts of £280m. The present Government is still trying to fight its way through this financial fog, and a series of meetings have been held with its International Monetary Fund creditors to attempt to put some order into the chaos and win back a degree of foreign confidence.

There are now signs that Nkrumah has certainly not given up the fight. In London two press announcements appeared last February. The first was a publisher's announcement of two new books[2] by the deposed president; and the second was a public meeting to launch them, called by the "Convention People's Party[3] of Ghana (Overseas Branch)," the main speakers to be Lord Brockway and Dr. David Pitt. At the meeting a stencilled document "Ghana Today" and a printed 4-page leaflet "Africa and the World"—both stemming from the same Fleet Street address, which is also the address of the CPP (Overseas), were distributed to the audience of a hundred or so (mostly Africans) present. The purport of these documents is to describe the terrible state of Ghana today under the National Liberation Council[4] (referred to as the "Notorious Liars Council"). We are informed that three separate attempts have been made to topple the NLC but that the world has not been told about them. Strikes are now said to be "rampant" in Ghana. "The most repressive and barbaric pieces of legislation known to civilised societies" have been decreed, including death by firing squad or twenty-five years in prison for "subversive activities"; civilians are tried by court martial;[5] unprecedented mass unemployment and hunger ravage the country. Nkrumah's New Year message broadcast to the people of Ghana over *Radio Guinea* is quoted:

> On my return all workers who have been dismissed will be reinstated. Free medical care and

[2] *The Challenge of the Congo.* By Kwame Nkrumah. Nelson, 42s. *Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah.* Nelson, 10s. 6d.

[3] This is the name of Nkrumah's Party.

[4] The present Ghanaian Government.

[5] It is unfortunately true that military tribunals have been set up, from which there is no appeal—a device all too reminiscent of Nkrumah's hated "preventive detention." But generally the NLC is thought to have done extremely well, both on the economic and the political sides. Foundations for the return to civilian Government have already been laid.

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hospitalisation will be restored. Education will once again be free at all levels and text books will again be supplied free of charge....

NKRUMAH'S TWO BOOKS are very much what one would have expected. An "axiom," the dictionary tells us, is a "self-evident truth." These *Axioms* are in fact quotes from Nkrumah's speeches and writings, expressing all kinds of heroic sentiments and exhortations, or providing discourses on Nkrumah's favourite subjects—the freedom struggle, independence, imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, African unity. If we can have *The Thoughts of Chairman Mao*, and indeed, the *Analects of Confucius*, why should we not have the *Axioms of Kwame Nkrumah*, bound in a neat little book for holding aloft and waving about? Here is a specimen axiom:

> Africa needs a new type of citizen, a dedicated, modest, honest, informed man. A man who submerges self in service to the nation and mankind. A man who abhors greed and detests vanity. A new type of man whose humility is his strength and whose integrity is his greatness.

Presumably a man like Nkrumah himself.

His Congo book gives a detailed account of the events there since independence in 1960. The hero is Lumumba and the villains are the foreign pressures which made peaceful progress impossible. I would not presume to judge its accuracy. But the attention of most readers, who are not Congo experts, will fix on the preface written by Kwame Nkrumah from Conakry, after the book was finished. "Certain members of the army and police, acting in co-operation with neo-colonialists, seized power while I was on my way to Hanoi," he writes.

> This latest example of imperialist interference in Africa is part of the world-wide struggle being waged between the independent developing states and the neo-colonialist, imperialist countries trying to exert pressure on them ... the frustrated neo-colonialists see no other way of achieving their aims to dominate and exploit.... Ghana, on the brink of a great industrial breakthrough ... had become too dangerous an example to the rest of Africa to be allowed to continue under a socialist-directed government....
>
> The movement for total liberation, from imperialism and neo-colonialism, is entering a new phase, the phase of an All-African People's Revolutionary armed struggle.

So can a man deceive himself. So can he retain, or try to retain, some potential for mischief. He has recently been accused by the Ghana Government of plotting with the Soviet Union, China, and Cuba. Whether or not this par-

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ticular accusation is true, the CPP (Overseas) has now come into the open; its words are there in print. How deeply one must regret that respected citizens in British public life should lend themselves to the machinations of a discredited, embittered exile who did so much to ruin his country.

THE GHANAIAN STORY is probably the most tragic of any of the new African states, just because hopes were highest and were most cruelly dashed. But certain general considerations run through one's mind as one ponders these events. First is the obvious lack of political experience among the majority of Africans—indeed how should there not be a lack? The heady wine of nationalism easily leads them to the feet of a charismatic leader who finds little difficulty in extinguishing opposition (oppositions are "un-African," he tells them) and emerging as a dictator—malevolent or benevolent according to his own personality, but always dangerous because of his uncontrolled power. Yet, secondly, once corruption sets in, there are intelligent Africans who are fully aware of what is going on, who value individual liberties and the rule of law, and who are prepared to risk their lives on behalf of their dreams of freedom and democracy. To make easy generalisations about Africans is tempting, but it is simply not true that Africans have no concern for democratic values. No human being worth the name is indifferent to arbitrary arrest, to not being able to speak his mind, or to the abuse of power by those in office. No African tribal chief in the land which J. B. Danquah named Ghana, remember, had anything like totalitarian powers; he lived under the constant threat of being de-stooled if he displeased his tribesmen.

What is true, however, is that Africans have still to gain prowess in the delicate art of working a modern democratic system. For it *is* a difficult and delicate art. And here is where most of us "progressives"—in Britain and also in America—should now be hanging our heads in shame. For, instead of encouraging them to acquire the art, we belittled it in their eyes. I think we are now beginning to see how badly, by so doing, we betrayed—there is no point in mincing words—the best among the Africans, and also our own best traditions. Tibor Szamuely has this to say in his Introduction to Afrifa's book:

> All too often [the "progressives"] justify preventive detention, make allowances for the suppression of opposition, and generally condone, in African and Asian countries, things which are violently (and rightly) denounced elsewhere. Africa, we are told, is different; we cannot apply our standards there, one-party government is actually good for them, they do not understand democracy in the way we do, corruption has always been a way of life there....

And, so he concludes, it is now our duty "to assist these young States in evolving forms of government that are adapted to their special circumstances and yet reflect our—and their—democratic ideals."

Whether we can indeed assist them in this way is by no means certain. Africans want to find their own salvation. But we can continue to uphold what *we* stand for and do Africans the courtesy of believing that human values—and temptations—are universal. In the meantime, the period of military ascendancy must work itself out, so that Africans—better prepared this time, one hopes, but can their military leaders prepare them?—may be given their second chance.

One other thought. We have become accustomed to hearing ourselves, and all our works, reviled by Africans and Asians in the flush of their triumphant nationalism; and we, with our king-size guilt complexes, are naturally more conscious of our failures than of anything praiseworthy in the imperial record. Yet we are often told of the immense regard in which the English universities they attended continue to be held by ex-colonial leaders, of the extent to which they were influenced by British political institutions and English literature. What we have rarely been told—perhaps because military men are less articulate than politicians and lawyers—is about the particular and peculiar role of Sandhurst in ex-colonial political evolution. It comes, therefore, as a surprise, to find the African soldier, Afrifa, giving eloquent tongue:

> Sandhurst gave us independent thinking, tolerance, and a liberal outlook.... There was no discrimination whatsoever. No one cared whether one was a prince, lord, commoner, foreigner, muslim or a black man.

And again:

> Now I look back on Sandhurst with nostalgia. It is one of the greatest institutions in the world.... It is an institution that teaches that all men are equal, that the profession of men-at-arms is essential, and a peaceful one. It shows the stupidity of racial conflicts, and the joy of the communion of all men in the service of peace.

West Africa is now living through its Sandhurst era. After that — back to the London School of Economics?

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The Great Comic Book Heroes

By Mordecai Richler

"QUIET! A REVOLUTION IS BREWING," begins a recent advertisement for the *New Book of Knowledge.*

> This is Gary. Age 11. He's a new breed of student. A result of the "quiet revolution" in our schools. He's spent happy hours on his project. Away from TV. Away from horror comics. Completely absorbed. Learning! Reading about cocoons, larvae, butterflies. . . .

No, no, Gary is no new breed. I recognise him. In my day he always did his homework immediately he came home from school. He never ate with his elbows on the table. Or peeked at his sister in the bath. Or shoplifted. Or sent unwanted pianos, ambulances, firemen, and bust developers to the class teacher, the unspeakable Miss Ornstein, who made us suffer creative games, like *Information Please* or INCREASING YOUR WORD POWER with the *Reader's Digest.* Gary ate his spinach. He made president of the Junior Red Cross Club and pinned *The 10 Rules of Hygiene* over his sink. He didn't sweat, he perspired. And he certainly never swiped a hard-earned dime from his father's trousers, the price of a brand-new comic book. Oh, the smell of those new comic books! The sheen, the glossy feel! *Tip-Top, Action, Detective,* and *Famous Funnies.*

Each generation its own nostalgia, its own endearing fantasy-figures. For my generation, born into the depression, beginning to encourage and count pubic hairs during World War II, there was nothing quite like the comic books. While bigger, more mature men were cunningly turning road signs to point in the wrong direction in Sussex, standing firm at Tobruk, Sending For More Japs, holding out at Stalingrad, making atomic bombs, burning Jews and gassing gypsies; while General ("Old Blood and Guts") Patton was opening the Anglo-American service club in London, saying, "The idea of these clubs could not be better because undoubtedly it is the destiny of the English and American people to rule the world . . ." and Admiral William F. ("Bull") Halsey was saying off-the-record, "I hate Japs. I'm telling you men that if I met a pregnant Japanese woman, I'd kick her in the belly"; we, the young, the hope of the world, were being corrupted by the violence in comic books. Ask Dr. Fredric Wertham, who wrote in *Seduction of The Innocent* (1954),

> . . . a ten-year-old girl . . . asked me why I thought it was harmful to read *Wonder Woman.* . . . She saw in her home many good books and I took that as a starting-point, explaining to her what good stories and novels were. "Supposing," I told her, "you get used to eating sandwiches made with very strong seasonings, with onions and peppers and highly spiced mustard. You will lose your taste for simple bread and butter and for finer food. The same is true for reading strong comic books. If later you want to read a good novel it may describe how a young boy and girl sit together and watch the rain falling. They talk about themselves and the pages of the book describe what their innermost little thoughts are. This is what is called literature. But you will never be able to appreciate that if in comic-book fashion you expect that any minute someone will appear and pitch both of them out of the window."

Or Kingsley Martin, who wrote that Superman was blond and saw in him the nefarious prototype of the Aryan Nazi. Never mind that Superman, the inspired creation of two Jewish boys, Jerome Siegal and Joe Shuster, was neither blond nor Aryan. It was a good theory. We were also being warped by *Captain Marvel, The Human Torch, The Flash, Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, Hawkman, Plastic Man, Sub Mariner,* and *Batman and Robin.* Our champions;

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our revenge figures against what seemed a gratuitously cruel adult world.

This is not to say our street was without intellectual dissent. After all social realism was the thing, then.

"There's Tarzan in the jungle, week in and week out," Solly said, "and he never once has to shit. It's not true to life."

"What about Wonder Woman?"

"Wonder Woman's a dame, you schmuck."

Wonder Woman was also a waste of time. Uncouth. Like ketchup in chicken soup. Or lighting up cigarette butts retrieved from the gutter. Reading was for improving the mind, my Aunt Ida said, and to that end she recommended *King's Row* or anything by John Gunther. Wonder Woman, according to Dr. Wertham, was a dyke as well. For boys, a frightening image. For girls, a morbid ideal. Yes, yes, but as Jules Feiffer observes in his nostalgic *The Great Comic Book Heroes*,[1] "Whether Wonder Woman was a lesbian's dream I do not know, but I know for a fact she was every Jewish boy's unfantasied picture of the world as it really was. You mean men weren't wicked and weak?... You mean women didn't have to be *stronger* than men to survive in the world? Not in *my* house!"

The Batman and Robin, the unsparing Dr. Wertham wrote, were also kinky.

> Sometimes Batman ends up in bed injured and young Robin is shown sitting next to him. At home they lead an idyllic life. They are Bruce Wayne and "Dick" Grayson. Bruce Wayne is described as a "socialite" and the official relationship is that Dick is Bruce's ward. They live in sumptuous quarters, with beautiful flowers in large vases.... Batman is sometimes shown in a dressing-gown.... It is like a wish dream of two homosexuals living together.

Unfortunately I cannot personally vouch for the sexual proclivities of "socialites," but I don't see anything necessarily homosexual in "beautiful flowers in large vases." This strikes me as witch-hunting. Sexual McCarthyism. Unless the aforesaid flowers were pansies, which would, I admit, just about clinch the good doctor's case. As, however, he does not specify pansies, we may reasonably assume they were another variety of flora. If so, what? Satyric rambling roses? Jewy yellow daffodils? Droopy impotent peonies? Communist-front orchids? More evidence, please.

Of more significance, perhaps, what Dr. Wertham fails to grasp is that we were already happily clued in on the sex life of our comic book heroes. As far back as 1939, publishers

[1] *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, by JULES FEIFFER. Dial Press, N.Y., $9.95; Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 70s.

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(less fastidious than the redoubtable Captain Maxwell) were offering, at fifty cents each, crude black and white comics which improvised pornographically on the nocturnal, even orgiastic, adventures of our champions. I speak here of GASOLINE ALLEY GANG BANG, DICK TRACY'S NIGHT OUT, BLIND DATE WITH THE DRAGON LADY, and the shocking but liberating CAPTAIN AMERICA MEETS WONDER WOMAN, all of which have long since become collector's items. It is worth pointing out, however, that I never came across anything juicy about Superman and Lois Lane, not even gossip, until dirty-minded intellectuals and Nazis had their say.

ITEM: Richard Kluger writes (*Partisan Review*, Winter 1966): "He could, of course, ravage any woman on earth (not excluding Wonder Woman, I daresay).... Beyond this, there is a tantalising if somewhat clinical and highly speculative theory about why Superman never bedded down with Lois, never really let himself get hotted up over her; Superman, remember, was the Man of Steel. Consider the consequences of supercoitus and the pursuit of The Perfect Orgasm at the highest level. So Supe, a nice guy, had to sublimate...."

ITEM: When Whiteman, one of the many Superman derivatives, this one published by the American Nazi Party, is asked whatever became of the original Superman, he replies: "Old Supey succumbed to the influence of Jew pornography.... It seems Superman was putting his X-ray vision to immoral use and was picked up by the vice squad as a Peeping Tom."

SUPERMAN OF COURSE WAS the original superhero. "Just before the doomed planet Krypton exploded to fragments, a scientist placed his infant son within an experimental rocketship, launching it toward earth!" Here Superman was discovered and finally adopted by the Kents, who gave him the name Clark. When they died "it strengthened a determination that had been growing in his mind. Clark decided he must turn his titanic strength into channels that would benefit mankind. And so was created... SUPERMAN, champion of the oppressed, the physical marvel who had sworn to devote his existence to helping those in need." Because Superman was invincible, he soon became something of a bore... until Mort Weisinger, a National Periodical Publications vice-president who has edited the strip since 1941, thought up an Achilles' heel for him. When exposed to fragments from the planet Krypton, Superman is shorn of his powers and reduced to mere earthly capabilities. A smooth touch, but the fact is the real Superman controversy has always centred on his assumed identity of Clark Kent, a decidedly faint-hearted reporter. Kent adores Lois Lane, who has no time for him. Lois is nutty for Superman, who in true aw shucks tradition has no time for any woman. "The truth may be," Jules Feiffer writes, "that Kent existed not for purposes of the story but the reader. He is Superman's opinion of the rest of us, a pointed caricature of what we, the non-criminal element, were really like. His fake identity is our real one." Well, yes, but I'm bound to reveal there's more to it than that. Feiffer, like so many before him, has overlooked a most significant factor: the Canadian *psyche*.

Yes. Superman was conceived by Toronto-born Joe Shuster and originally worked not for the *"Daily Planet"* but for a newspaper called *"The Star,"* modelled on the Toronto *Star*. This makes his assumed identity of bland Clark Kent not merely understandable, but artistically inevitable. Kent is the archetypal middle-class Canadian WASP, superficially nice, self-effacing, but within whom there burns a hate-ball, a would-be avenger with superhuman powers, a smasher of bridges, a breaker of skyscrapers, a potential ravager of wonder women. And (may those who have scoffed at Canadian culture in the past please take note) a universal hero. Superman, first drawn by Shuster in 1938, now appears in twenty languages. This spring, God willing, Lois Kane, who has pined for him all these years, will be married off to a reformed mad scientist, Dr. Lex Luthor. I am indebted to another *aficionado*, Alexander Ross, a *Macleans* editor, for all this information. Last March Ross went to visit Joe Shuster, fifty and still single ("I have never met a girl who matched up to

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Horizon was founded at the beginning of the war, by Peter Watson, Cyril Connolly, and Stephen Spender. Peter Watson, the art editor, was a most discriminating patron of painters; Cyril Connolly, the chief editor, had long wished to have a magazine which supported and defended good writing during a dark period; Stephen Spender was called in to look after poetry and generally advise.

The outbreak of war precipitated rather than prevented the publication of *Horizon*. It was an assertion of the light of intelligence and imagination, of personal individuality, against conscription and totalitarianism. With its strong interest in French painting and literature, it maintained through the war and early post-war years connections with the continent of Europe. It was largely due to *Horizon* that English literature was less insular during the war than it is perhaps today.

Horizon published many serious-minded pieces, but it also maintained notes of gaiety, frivolity and subversiveness. In a time of glum patriotic duty, Connolly represented the responsibility of individualists to assert a certain irresponsibility.

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Lois Lane," he has said), at Forest Hills, Long Island, where he lives with his aged mother. Shuster, sadly, never did own the rights on his creation. It is the property of NPP, who say that by 1948 the legendary Shuster was no longer able to draw the strip because of failing eyesight. He was discharged and now earns a living of sorts as a free-lance cartoonist. "He is trying," Ross writes, "to paint pop art—serious comic strips—and hopes eventually to promote a one-man show in some chic Manhattan gallery." Such, Ross might have added, is the inevitable fate of the artistic innovator under capitalism.

If Superman, written and drawn by a hard-faced committee with 20-20 vision these days, continues to flourish, so do the imitations; and here it is worth noting how uncomfortably the parodies of the anarchistic left and broad Jewish humour have come to resemble the earnestly-meant propaganda of the lunatic right.

ON THE LEFT, *The Realist* has for some time now been running a comic strip about LeRoi Jones called *Supercoon*. Little LeRoi becomes mighty Supercoon, threat to the virtue of white women everywhere, by uttering the magic curse, "Mother-fucker." Jones, I'm told, was so taken with this parody that he wrote the script for an animated cartoon called *Supercoon* which he wished to have made and released with the film version of his play *Dutchman*. It has, however, yet to be produced. On a more inane level, *Kosher Comics*, a one-shot parody, published in New York, which runs strips called *The Lone Arranger* (with the masked marriage broker and Tante), *Tishman of the Apes*, and *Dick Shamus*, also includes Supermax, who is called upon to defeat invaders from the planet Blech. The invaders are crazy for matzoh balls.

Meanwhile, back at American Nazi headquarters in Arlington, Va., the *Stormtrooper* magazine has recently given us *Whiteman*. "*Jew Commies Tremble . . . Nigger Criminals Quake In Fear . . . Liberals Head For The Hills . . . Here Comes WHITEMAN.*" In his first adventure Whiteman, whose costume is a duplicate of Supey's, except that the emblem on his chest is a swastika rather than an *S*, "fights an interplanetary duel with a diabolical fiend . . . THE JEW FROM OUTER SPACE." He also does battle with SUPERCOON. In real life, Whiteman is a milk man named Lew Cor (Rockwell spelt backwards, for Nazi Commander George Lincoln Rockwell) and is transformed into Whiteman by speaking the secret words, *"Lieh Geis!"*

> "With my super-vision [Whiteman says] I can see three niggers have been caught in the act of trying to burn down a Negro church. If they had not been caught in the act, some poor southern white man would have been blamed for it."

He soon beats up the Negro arsonists ("Sweet dreams, Jigaboo"), but meanwhile, inside a mysterious spacecraft, MIGHTY MOTZA is creating SUPERCOON with an atomic reverse-ray gun. The emblem on Supercoon's chest, incidentally, is a half-peeled banana, and naturally he is no match for Whiteman, who quickly eliminates him.

> "So long Supercoon! You just couldn't make the grade with your second-class brain. With my white man intelligence, I have reduced you to a super-revolting protoplasmic slime. Ugh! Looks like a vile jellyfish."

In the past, comic strips, or derivatives thereof, have been put to less extreme political purpose. All of us, I'm sure, remember the late Vicky's Supermac. Parallax, publishers of *Kosher Comics*, have also brought out *Great Society Comics*, with SuperLBJ and Wonderbird; and *Bobman and Teddy Comics*, featuring the Kennedy brothers. Then day by day, in the Paris edition of the *New York Herald Tribune-Washington Post* and hundreds of other newspapers, Steve Canyon and Buzz Sawyer risk their lives for us in Viet Nam. Canyon, a more politically-conscious type than Sawyer, has recently had some sour things to say about dove-like congressmen and student peaceniks: neither fighter has yet had anything to say about Whiteman. If and when the crunch comes on the Mekong Delta, it remains an open question whether or not Buzz and Steve would accept Whiteman's support.

Canyon's political past, incidentally, is not un-

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blemished. When he came to serve at a U.S. Air Force base in northern Canada in 1960, the Peterborough (Ont.) *Examiner* took umbrage.

> We have become disturbed by the political implications of the strip. The hero and his friends were on what was obviously Canadian soil, but it seemed to be entirely under the domination of American troops who were there as a first-line defence against the Russians.

There was only one manly answer possible; Canadian-made strips such as *Larry Brannon*, a non-starter, who was to glamorise the face of Canada. In his first adventure Brannon visited "Toronto, focus of the future, channel for the untold wealth of the north, communications centre of a vast, rich hinterland, metropolis of rare and precious metals." The last time we were asked to make do with Canadian comics was during the war years when in order to protect *our* balance of payments the government stopped the import of American comic books. The Canadian comic books hastily published to fill the gap were simply awful. We wouldn't have them. Banning American comic books was a typically unimaginative measure, for whatever pittance the government made up in U.S. currency, it lost in home front morale. Comics, as Feiffer has written, were our junk. Our fix. And before long a street corner black market in *Detective* and *Action* comics began to flourish. Just as we had come to the support of Americans during the prohibition years, thereby founding more than one Canadian family fortune, so the Americans now saw that we didn't go without. Customs barriers erected against a free exchange of ideas never work.

I HAVE NO QUARREL with Feiffer's selection from the comics for his *The Great Comic Book Heroes*, but his text, the grammar and punctuation quirky, seemed to me somewhat thin. Feiffer is most knowledgeable, a veritable Rashi, on the origins and history of the comic books. He is at his most absorbing when he writes about his own experience as a comic book artist. He learned to draw in the schlock houses, the art schools of the business. "We were a generation," he writes. "We thought of ourselves the way the men who began the movies must have." And indeed they went to see *Citizen Kane* again and again, to study Welles' use of angle shots. Rumours spread that Welles in his turn had read and learned from the comic books. Fellini was certainly a devotee.

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In the schlock houses, Feiffer writes, "Artists sat lumped in crowded rooms, knocking it out for a page rate. Pencilling, inking, lettering in the balloons for ten dollars a page, sometimes less . . ."; decadence setting in during the war. The best men, Feiffer writes, went off to fight, hacks sprouting up everywhere. "The business stopped being thought of as a life's work and became a stepping stone. Five years in it at best, then on to better things: a daily strip, or illustrating for the *Saturday Evening Post*, or getting a job with an advertising agency. . . . By the end of the war the men who had been in charge of our childhood fantasies had become archetypes of the grownups who made us need to have fantasies in the first place."

But it was Dr. Wertham, with his *Seduction Of The Innocent*, who really brought an end to an era. His book led to the formation of a busybody review board and an insufferable code that amounted to the emasculation of comic books as we had known them.

1. Respect for parents, the moral code, and for honourable behaviour, shall be fostered.
2. Policemen, judges, government officials and respected institutions shall never be presented in such a way as to create disrespect for established authority.
3. In every instance good shall triumph over evil and the criminal punished for his misdeeds.

To be fair, there were uplifting, mind-improving side-effects. Culture came to the newsstands in the shape of *True Comics*, *Bible Comics*, and the unforgettable series of *Classic Comics*, from which Feiffer quotes the death scene from Hamlet.

> *Fear not, queen mother!*
> *It was Laertes*
> *And he shall die at my hands!*
> *. . . Alas! I have been poisoned*
> *And now I, too, go*
> *To join my deceased father!*
> *I, too—I—AGGGRRRAA!*

Today men in their thirties and forties trade old comic books with other addicts and buy first issues of *Superman* and *Batman* for fifty dollars or more. If the original boyhood appeal of the comic books was all but irresistible to my generation, I have not gone into the reasons until now for they seemed to me obvious. Superman, The Flash, The Human Torch, even Captain Marvel, were our *golems*. They were invulnerable, all-conquering, where we were puny, miserable, and defeated. They were also infinitely more reliable than real-life champions. Max Schmeling could take Joe Louis. Mickey Owen might drop that third strike. The Nazi Rats could by-pass the Maginot line and the Yellow-Belly Japs could take Singapore, but neither dared mix it up with Captain America, the original John Bircher, endlessly decorated by FBI head J. Arthur Grover, and sponsor of the Sentinels of Liberty, to which we could all belong (regardless of race, colour, or creed) by sending a dime to Timely Publications, 330 West 42nd St., N.Y., and signing a pledge (the original loyalty oath?) that read: *"I solemnly pledge to uphold the principles of the Sentinels of Liberty and assist Captain America in his war against spies in the U.S.A."*

Finally, many of our heroes were made of paltry stuff. The World's Mightiest Man—Powerful Champion of Justice, Captain Marvel, was mere Billy Batson, newsboy, until he uttered the magic word, *"Shazam!"* The Flash is another case in point.

> Faster than the streak of lightning in the sky. . . . Swifter than the speed of light itself. . . . Fleeter than the rapidity of thought . . . is *The Flash*, reincarnation of the winged Mercury. . . . His speed is the dismay of scientists, the joy of the oppressed—And the open-mouthed wonder of the multitudes!

Originally, however, he was as weak as you or me. A decidedly forlorn figure. He was Jay Garrick, "an unknown student at a midwestern university . . ." and, for my money, a Jew. The creators of *The Flash*, Gardner Fox and Harry Lampert, like Arthur Miller, wrote at a time, remember, when Jews were still thinly disguised as Gentiles on the stage, in novels, and comic books. There is no doubt, for instance, that *The Green Lantern* has its origins in Hassidic mythology. Will Eisner's *The Spirit*, so much admired by Feiffer, is given to cabalistic superstitions and speaking in parables. With *The Flash*, however, we are on the brink of a new era, a liberated era. Jay Garrick is Jewish, but Reform. Semi-assimilated. In the opening frame lovely Joan (significantly blonde) won't date him, because he is only a scrub on the university football team while Bull Tyron is already a captain. "A man of your build and brains," she says, "could be a star . . . A scrub is just an old washwoman! You won't put your mind to football. . . !" Jay, naturally, is intellectually inclined. Probably he is taking freshman English with Leslie Fiedler. An eye-opener! Huck Finn and Nigger Jim, like Batman and Robin, are fags. Jay, however, spends most of the time in the lab with his professor. Then one day an experiment with hard water goes "wrong." Jay, overcome by fumes, lurches forward. ("It's . . . it's . . . too much for me. . . .") He lies between life and death for weeks, coming out of it endowed with superhuman powers. "Science," the doctor explains, "knows that hard water makes a person act much quicker than ordinarily. . . . By an intake of its gases, Jay can walk, talk,

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run, and think swifter than thought. . . . He will probably be able to outrace a bullet!! He is a freak of science!" Briefly, he is now The Flash.

How puerile, how unimaginative, today's comic strips seem by comparison. Take Rex Morgan, M.D., for instance. In my day to be a doctor was to be surrounded by hissing test tubes and vile green gases. It was to be either a cackling villain with a secret formula that would reduce Gotham City to the size of a postage stamp or to be a noble genius, creator of behemoths who would bring hope to the oppressed multitudes. The best that can be expected of the loquacious Dr. Morgan is that he will lecture us on the hidden dangers of medicare. Or save a student from LSD addiction. There's no magic in him. He's commonplace. A bore.

New Light on Judaeo-Christianity?

The Evidence of Abd al-Jabbar — By S. M. Stern

The press has recently resounded with reports of the discovery of Judaeo-Christian writings embedded in an Arabic book—only known in a single manuscript in Istanbul—by the 10th-century Muslim theologian, Abd al-Jabbar. The contents of the passage in question formed the subject of a lecture, which gave rise to reports about new gospels, new light on the origins of Christianity, a detailed account of the "tragic history" of a Judaeo-Christian sect, and so on. They first appeared in American and English newspapers but were then reproduced in the press of many other countries: during recent visits to Turkey and Greece I found amusing signs of the interest with which these revelations were received by local newspaper readers.

It is difficult to assess the respective shares of the lecturer and the reporter in the exaggerated importance attributed to the texts. Newspapermen, who do not claim to be experts, could easily overestimate the importance of such discoveries, and it is clear that many of the absurdities and confusions in the press accounts must be imputed to them. But an eminent scholar is also quoted as having said that "Abd al-Jabbar's texts equal the Dead Sea Scrolls in importance." Little wonder, then, that expectations of important new information about the origins of Christianity were raised even among the well-informed—not to speak of holders of eccentric ideas about the story of Jesus, who, relying on the confused reports, rushed to announce that their ideas were "vindicated" by the new texts. How could "new light" on early Judaeo-Christianity fail to shed new light also on the origins of Christianity?

S. M. Stern *is a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, and the author of* Fātimid Decrees (*Faber, 1964*).

All the immediate disciples of Jesus were Jews who, while believing that their master was the Messiah whom God had promised to send to the Jewish people, continued during his life and after his death to observe the law given by God to Israel through Moses. Soon some pagans joined the society of those who believed in Jesus as the Messiah, and not only were these accepted but the faithful of Jewish extraction also came to hold the view that the coming of the Messiah meant the abolition of the ritual laws of Moses. A religious genius, Saul of Tarsus, better known by his Latin name as Paul, worked out a profound doctrine to justify the end of the rule of the law. The door was wide open for missionary work among the non-Jews, the Gentiles, who soon formed the vast majority of the Christian church. Christianity ceased to be a Jewish sect; made itself at home in the Greco-Roman world; built up its theology with the help of Greek philosophy; finally, under the Emperor Constantine, conquered the Roman Empire. Thus Christianity was launched on its spectacular course as one of the great forces of universal history.

The majority of the Jewish nation, which had given birth to Christianity, watched with dismay, first the rise of a sect which in their view perverted the doctrine about the Messiah, and then that of a new religion which threw off the yoke of the law of Moses, the basis of God's covenant with Israel. Judaism, too, used to be a missionary religion—but henceforth it proved no match for Christianity, which offered the same message of an ethical monotheism as Judaism, but unencumbered with its ritual

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laws. Judaism, checked in its course, turned its back on the outside world and became again what it had been before, the national religion of the Jewish people. For the Christian Church, which saw itself as the "true Israel"—rightful heir of the Jewish nation which had rejected the Messiah—the vigorous survival of Judaism was a thorn in the side, and the scene was set both for the millennial persecution of the Jews by triumphant Christianity, and for Jewish hatred of the Christian religion, which, by admitting the divinity of Jesus, was in their eyes nothing short of idolatrous.

There is a striking contrast between the fate of the Christian Church, a powerful institution which played a part second to none in the destinies of the world, and that of the Jews clinging tenaciously to their belief in being God's chosen people and, sustained by this belief, surviving every onslaught. There was, however, a group between the two enemies, Judaism and Christianity, belonging to both and to neither, which soon disappeared leaving but faint traces: the Judaeo-Christians, *i.e.*, the group which clung to the laws of Moses and withstood the current which carried Christianity into the Gentile world. We know well that the determination of Paul and those like him to bring the gospel of the Messiah to the pagan world and to dissociate it from the Mosaic law did not go without challenge—witness Paul's own letters and the Acts of the Apostles, written by an ardent admirer of Paul, one of the main themes of which is the account of how Paul's views on the mission to the Gentiles were accepted by the leaders of the Christian community in Jerusalem. The author minimises the opposition to Paul, but does not pass it over in silence. "Now certain persons who had come down from Judaea began to teach the brotherhood that those who were not circumcised in accordance with Mosaic practice could not be saved. That brought them into fierce controversy with Paul and Barnabas" (*Acts, 15, 5-7*). The council of the apostles in Jerusalem decided in favour of Paul. Yet Christians who refused to follow the majority in giving up the observance of the Jewish law persisted for some centuries. They formed communities in Transjordan and Syria, and Church Fathers such as Irenaeus, Epiphanius, and Jerome preserved some accounts of their beliefs and quoted a few passages from their books. They were execrated by the Jews and decried as heretics by the Christians and, when they disappeared, they only left a vague memory of their existence. Well may those who admire success say that they have gone where they belonged—to "the dust-heap of history." But the historian of religion meditates with interest on these pathetic people who refused to conform and held on to what corresponded to the practice of the actual disciples of Jesus, and wishes he knew more about them—if for no other reason than for this: that if their traditions could be recovered, they would be of great help towards reconstructing the doctrines of the circle of Jesus. The writings included in the New Testament, and more especially the Gospels, are due to people for whom the preaching of the message of Jesus to the Gentiles was an accepted fact. It is easy to realise that this must have deeply coloured their picture of Jesus. The recovery of Judaeo-Christian writings which would serve as a corrective to the traditions of the main trend of the Christian Church would rightly be counted among the greatest of literary discoveries. Unfortunately, the reports of the discovery of such Judaeo-Christian texts are misguided. The facts are as follows.

Abd al-Jabbar, Chief Kadi of the city of Rayy (the predecessor of modern Teheran) wrote in A.D. 995 a book in which he set out to prove that Muhammad was a true prophet. Among his numerous miracles he includes the statements in the Koran about Jesus which, he argues, are correct and inspired by God, whereas the contrary accounts of the Christians are wrong. Thus it is true that the Christians believe, as the Koran says, that Jesus was God, one of three, and their subtle explanations about the doctrine of the Trinity are sophistries. Muhammad was right to claim that the Christian religion as professed by its followers did not correspond to the original doctrine of Jesus, but was a perversion of it. The Koran denies that the Jews have killed Jesus: "And for their saying: We killed the Messiah, Jesus, son of Mary, the messenger of God, though they did not kill him and did not crucify him, but he was counterfeited for them"—this, says Abd al-Jabbar, is the truth, and not the account of the crucifixion as told by the Christians.

All these propositions are defended with arguments which—as so often with this kind of argument—are a curious mixture of acumen, sophistry, and naïveté. What is important for us is to note that there are passages in Abd al-Jabbar which might ultimately go back to Christians who observed the Jewish laws and therefore considered the other Christians as renegades from the original teaching of the Messiah. Such texts may have come to the knowledge of Muslim converts from Christianity who were keen to turn texts of their former religion into weapons for their new one. On the other hand, it is not impossible—it is in fact more probable—that the arguments are

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not derived from Judaeo-Christians, but simply invented by such ex-Christians converted to Islam. Since Abd al-Jabbar does not reveal the sources of his stories, there can be no certainty.

ABD AL-JABBAR collects a number of passages from the gospels which show Jesus observing the Jewish law. Every reader of the New Testament could produce something similar. It would not have been beyond Abd al-Jabbar, a shrewd man if anything, to cull such an anthology from an Arabic translation. Yet he may have used—who knows through how many intermediaries—a Judaeo-Christian collection of passages proving this (for them essential) point. We are told by some Fathers of the Church that a Judaeo-Christian scholar of the 2nd century, Symmachus, had collected some passages from the gospel of Matthew.

In a long account Abd al-Jabbar explains how the ritual laws of Judaism—circumcision, turning in prayer towards Jerusalem, the observance of the Sabbath, the prohibition on eating pork, the admissibility of divorce—were observed by the original disciples of Jesus as well as by himself, and were wickedly put aside by the Christians of the following generations (especially by the cynical opportunism of Paul). This account could have been made up by a Muslim polemicist; although one could argue that it was derived from some Judaeo-Christian circle who of course would have felt passionately about this subject. The original phrases have been kept as far as possible in the following summary.

The disciples of Christ continued to associate with the Jews in their synagogues and the only difference between them concerned the person of the Messiah. The Christians, however, complained to the Roman authorities that they were persecuted by the Jews. The Romans invited them to become like themselves, turning in their prayers to the east, instead of to Jerusalem, and eating pagan food—this was accepted by the greater part of the Christian community. But the disciples of Jesus disapproved of this and refused to hand over the gospel to the traitors. Fearing that the Romans might force them to do so, they fled and hid. The Romans wrote to their governor in Mosul and Mesopotamia [*or Arabia; none of these provinces belonged to the Roman Empire in the first century*] and some of the true disciples were seized and killed. The Romanised Christians decided to replace the original gospel on which they could not lay their hands by commissioning various men to write down what they remembered of it. Eighty gospels were composed, but many of the passages of the original gospel were left out, partly on purpose, partly owing to forgetfulness. The cross and the crucifixion were not contained in it [*the original gospel*]. Four versions were finally chosen, none of which was in Hebrew in which the Messiah and his disciples spoke—this was done to facilitate the distortion of the Messiah's original teaching.

Paul, originally called Saul, was a cunning rogue who only sought power. First he assisted in the persecution of the Christians and then left Jerusalem. When he returned after a long absence, he went over to the Christians and advised them to dissociate themselves from the Jews and turn to the nations hostile to them. As the reason for his conversion he alleged a vision on the road to Damascus, where God [*not Jesus*] appeared to him. He said that God lifted him up to heaven for a fortnight and spoke to him against the Jews. Paul was taken by the Jews to the Roman governor, who wanted to whip him; but Paul declared that he was a Roman [*i.e., in the sense of a follower of the pagan Roman religion, which is an obvious distortion of Paul's invocation of his Roman citizenship, Acts, 22, 27*]. So he was taken to Constantinople where he incited the Romans against the Jews. He gained the ear of the Empress —who, since the Romans are not allowed to divorce their wives [*this is of course quite wrong*] was incensed against the religion of the Jewish prophets who permitted divorce by the husband. Paul declared that a man ought to take one wife only and thus won popularity with the feminist Empress and all Roman ladies. [*This, and not an ordinance of Jesus, is being alleged as the origin of the Christian prohibition of divorce.*] Since the Romans abominated circumcision, Paul abolished it. He allowed the eating of pork, saying: Not that which goes into a man's inside is forbidden, but that which comes out of him, namely, lies. [*The words of Jesus declaring all foods as clean—Mark, 7, 17 ff.—are here being attributed to Paul.*] Similarly he allowed the eating of the meat of animals slaughtered by pagans, adopted the Roman custom of turning in prayer to the east, abolished the ritual washings before prayer, and allowed Christian women to marry pagans. The law is evil, he said, and when its commandments are abolished, God's grace is completed. Thus Paul went over from the religious practices of the Messiah to those of the Romans. It was the Christians who turned Romans, rather than the Romans Christians.

The Emperor Titus, accepting Paul's denunciations of the Jews, waged war against them and took much booty, which increased Paul's reputation. But finally, when he had to admit that the Messiah, and even himself, had been circumcised, and he, claiming to be a healer, could not cure his own illness of elephantiasis, Paul's insincerity was found out and he was crucified by Nero. [*The author thinks that Nero reigned after Titus.*] The Romans then returned to paganism and remained so until the time of Constantine.

Constantine was the son of Emperor Pilatus [*in reality: of Constantius Chlorus*] and of Helena, who was originally a barmaid in Harran. [*Helena was a woman of humble origin; her native town is uncertain, but one version does have it that she came from Edessa, a Mesopotamian town near Harran.*] Helena was a Christian and, by introducing Christian monks to her husband, persuaded him of the unworldliness of the Christians.

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Constantine suffered of leprosy, which according to Roman custom excluded him from the office of Emperor—this made him turn to Christianity, which knew not of this prejudice. When the Romans were attacked by a barbarian army, he let them perform the rites to the pagan gods, and when they were defeated, put instead the cross on their standards. Since by chance the enemy retreated, he gave that out as the victory of the cross. Thus he was able to abolish paganism, turn the pagan temples (especially those of Athens and Harran) into monasteries for monks who served him as spies. But apart from idolatry, he did not abolish the Roman customs admitted by Paul into Christianity. Those who remained faithful to the religion of the Messiah [*i.e., who retained the Jewish law*] were persecuted, were forced to worship the cross, eat pork and follow the Roman customs. Those who refused were killed.

Constantine's successors introduced further novelties into Christianity. They adopted Sunday instead of the Sabbath, and fixed the day of the birth of the Messiah on the pagan festival known as the Birthday of Time. [*It is true that the feast of Epiphany on January 6th took the place of the Egyptian festival of the Birthday of Aeon, "Time"*.] Whereas the Messiah and his disciples fasted on the Jewish fast-days, a new period of a fifty-day fast was now introduced. They also adopted the pagan use of incense, and put up images in the churches.

THIS EXTRAORDINARY STORY is not devoid of some interest—as a fanciful attempt to explain how the original way of life of the disciples of Jesus resulted in the Christian religion. As seen by the author, the principal culprit is Paul. We know that he was, naturally enough, an object of hatred to early Judaeo-Christian sects. In their legends he appeared as the adversary of Peter. The 4th-century author Epiphanius reports that it was told of him that he had been a Greek who became a Jewish proselyte because he wanted to marry the daughter of the Jewish high priest —but because he was not allowed to marry the girl he wrote against circumcision, the Sabbath, and the law. The spirit of this tale is not so far from the caricature of Paul presented in the account used by Abd al-Jabbar. There are also somewhat similar stories about Paul and Constantine in other Muslim authors. Since the Muslims also had an interest in showing that historical Christianity was not the religion professed by Jesus, it is not impossible that the story is the invention of an ex-Christian convert to Islam. If we preferred to attribute the story to Judaeo-Christians, it *would* be interesting evidence for the fierce hatred kept alive in their circles. But the historical errors in the account are enough to show that we have here an entirely derivative piece of work, based on the Acts of the Apostles and some passages of the Pauline epistles, but mainly on the somewhat coarse fancy of its author.

The part of the story concerning Constantine can be proved to derive from the pagans of Harran, in which city paganism survived well into the Islamic period. They had good reason to show Constantine, the man who ushered in the decline of paganism in the Roman Empire, in as bad a light as possible. This part is thus certainly not of Judaeo-Christian origin; and instead of assuming that the Muslim author coupled a pagan and a Judaeo-Christian story, it is more plausible to conclude that he took over the pagan story of Constantine and supplemented it with a fanciful travesty of Paul's history.

THERE WERE SOME early Christian sects of gnostic character who so emphasised the divine nature of Christ that they denied the reality of the crucifixion. They found it inconceivable that the divinity should suffer death. We hear of one of these groups that—taking advantage of the stylistic ambiguity of the account in *Mark, 15, 21 ff.*—they claimed that the man crucified was not Jesus, but Simon of Cyrene. In the account used by Abd al-Jabbar, which bases itself on an unknown gospel, another kind of false identity is alleged: Judas Iscariot, who promised to single out his master by kissing him, kissed the wrong man. Note, however, that this is by no means implied by the text quoted for the purpose, but is a rather quibbling *inference* from it. The inference about the exchanged identity does not, however, depend on any feature particular to the gospel used, but could have been made from the canonical gospel stories as well. The following is a résumé.

On the Thursday before the Passover, the Jews came to Herod and complained against Jesus. He ordered his attendants to go and arrest him, but when they were asked whether they knew him, they said no. Neither did the Jews know him, but they said they would surely find someone to point him out. They met Judas Iscariot who offered to indicate Jesus by kissing him and was paid thirty silver pieces. Judas after kissing a man disappeared in the crowd. The man, when arrested, showed great perturbation. When Herod saw his fright he had pity on him and interrogated him in a friendly manner. The man denied that he claimed to be the Messiah. Herod said to the Jews that the man denied the accusation, and washed his hands of his blood. Pilate asked Herod to send him the man who showed the same signs of fear before Pilate. Pilate returned him to Herod saying that he found in him no guilt but neither could he get anything reasonable out of him. Herod put the man into prison overnight. Next day he was

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mocked and whipped by the Jews and crucified in a field. His last words were: my God, why have you forsaken me, O God, why have you left me? Judas came to the Jews asking about the man arrested the day before. When he heard that he was crucified he was greatly astonished and went to the field. Seeing the man he exclaimed: This is an innocent man, this is innocent blood. Throwing the thirty pieces of silver at the faces of the Jews, he went to his house and hanged himself.

The text does not imply at all that the man crucified was other than Jesus. This is deduced from the facts that the identification was made by Judas alone, that the arrested man was greatly frightened, that he did not admit to being the Messiah, and that Judas proclaimed him to be innocent (as he does also in *Matthew, 27, 4*). It is easily seen how far-fetched the deduction is. Abd al-Jabbar is of course delighted to find the Koranic doctrine of the mistaken crucifixion vindicated. One is inclined to ascribe the whole argument to him (or to another Muslim author). The only puzzle is why an uncanonical gospel was used. (Abd al-Jabbar is in fact under the erroneous impression that the story he quotes is in the canonical gospels.) This *may* point to some obscure sect as the source of the text, and possibly of at least part of the argument deduced from it.

Another, even more strange, proof for the argument that the crucified man was not Jesus is derived from a modified version of John's gospel (*19, 26–7*) which is quoted in the following form:

> The Messiah was standing near the place of crucifixion. Mary, mother of the Messiah, came to the place. The crucified saw her and said to her from the cross: "There is your son," and said to the Messiah: "There is your mother." Mary took him by his hand and went away.

Thus, it is not the crucified Jesus who entrusts his mother to the "beloved disciple," but the unknown substitute who points out to each other Jesus and Mary standing in the crowd. Here I feel the text itself must have been tampered with—for it seems obvious that we have an edited version of the passage from John rather than an independent text.

Abd al-Jabbar also offers some quotations from uncanonical gospels, saying for instance that one gospel began with the words: "This is the table of descent of Jesus the son of Joseph the carpenter"; and referring to an unknown episode of the crucifixion in another: "When he was crucified, there came his mother Mary with her children, Jacob, Simon, and Judah, and stood in front of him. He said to her from the cross: Take your children and go away!"

There is also an unexpected piece of information concerning the views of some Jews about Jesus. The traditional Jewish view of Jesus was hostile. He was considered as a perverter of true religion and the usual Jewish account of his life consisted of a malicious parody of the Christian accounts. But from Abd al-Jabbar we hear that some Jews believed Jesus to have been neither divine as the Christians hold, nor a prophet, as he was believed to be by the Muslims, but a righteous and God-fearing man who obtained a following among his people which aroused envy and led to his unjust execution. They said that Jesus himself did not claim to be the Messiah, since he denied this accusation before Pilate (*Luke, 23, 4, 9*) and forbade his disciples to say that he was the Messiah (*Matthew, 15, 13–20*). From other sources we know that similar views were held by some Karaite Jews. (The Karaites did not acknowledge the authority of the Talmud, which formed the basis of Rabbinical, "Rabbanite," Judaism.) It seems, alas, that the expression of such a view about Jesus was due rather to the wish to be able to charge the Rabbanites with the persecution of that righteous man than an enlightened rationalism *à la* Renan.

THE CONCLUSIONS are clear. The texts are of interest even if most of them seem to be the product of Muslim polemics against Christianity. If some of them could be ascribed to some Judaeo-Christian circle, they would gain in importance. But it must be kept in mind that, first, it is uncertain whether any of the texts really go back to Judaeo-Christians; secondly, that even if one decides in favour of the hypothesis that they do, the sect from which they derived would still remain shadowy. The "long account of the history of a Judaeo-Christian sect" allegedly contained in Abd al-Jabbar's passage is mere fiction—it is not there. Thus, if the texts shed any light on Judaeo-Christianity, the light is dim indeed. They shed, however, no light whatsoever on the origins of Christianity. The statement of an eminent scholar about the texts in Abd al-Jabbar "equalling the Dead Sea Scrolls in importance" bears witness to a charming enthusiasm, but not to much good sense. The texts are of some value for scholars. But the public need no longer scan the daily and weekly papers for the "latest revelations" about the crucifixion and the doctrines of the early Christians all derived from Abd al-Jabbar. For there are none to be had from that source.

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C. Day Lewis

Philosophy Lectures

He goes about it and about,
By elegant indirections clears a route
To the inmost truth.
Cutting the ground from underneath
Rogue analogies, dialectic tares,
See how he bares
And shames the indulgent, weed-choked soil,
Shaving his field to the strictly meaningful!
Now breathless we
Await, await the epiphany—
A miracle crop to leap from the bald ground.

Not one green shoot, however, is discerned.

Well, watch this reaper-and-binder bumbling round
A shuddered field. Proud sheaves collapse
In narrowing squares. A coarser job, perhaps—
Corn, corncockle and poppy lie
Corded, inseparable. Now each eye
Fastens on that last stand of corn:
Hares, partridge?—no, surely a unicorn
Or phoenix will be harbouring there
Ripe for revelation. Harvest forgot, we stare
From the field's verge as the last ears fall.

Not even a rabbit emerges. Nothing at all.

Are the two fields identical,
Only the reapers different? Misdirected
Or out of our minds, we expected
A wrong thing, the impossible
Or merely absurd—creatures of fire and fable
Where bread was the intention,
Harvest where harvest was not meant.
Yet in both fields we saw a right end furthered:
Something was gathered.

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The Thinking Eye

Gombrich on Norms & Forms — By GEORGE STEINER

OF LATE we are neo-Kantians all. Human perception and activity, even at levels which seem most spontaneous, most "natural," are now thought to be highly conventionalised. We feel, we see, we communicate our sense of an exterior world not in some inevitable organic or immediate way, but through specialised processes of expectation and selection. To a degree latent in Kant's theory of knowledge but never before as fully realised, we now ascribe the shape of our experience of reality and of our reactions to it to certain selective categories or, as present terminology would say, to certain prepared codes.

The key relations and tonal resolutions which seem to a western ear profoundly natural, whose absence or frustration seem to cause a physical malaise, are, in fact, specific historical conventions, rules of a specific game. Our eye selects from a total field of vision those relationships of distance and volume, those formal and chromatic values which have been "coded" for us by our particular habituation to perspective, three-dimensionality, certain colour associations, and so on. If hypotheses now being tested by clinical and social psychologists prove right, even our most "instinctive" sexual responses and imaginings will be shown to be intensely historical and specialised. That language is very largely a stylised code—that any particular language cuts out a segment of reality and structures it according to conventional rules of play—is one of the principal notions of modern linguistics, psychology, and anthropology.

What is not known and constitutes almost the dominant question in psychology and the social sciences is the relative importance of genetic and of social determinants in our conventions of life. Social and cultural factors are obviously of immense importance. We experience reality in the special perspective prepared for us by our historical inheritance and cultural models. Birth, food, kinship, art, sexual relations, the linear progression or cyclical return of time, have different attributes, different practical and symbolic meanings, in different societies and cultures; they are experienced differently in different locales or at different economic levels of the same culture. If such fundamental coordinates as "reason" and "insanity" have, as Michel Foucault has shown, their conventional and localised historical meaning, so does death. In any complete sense, the meanings and histories of death are as diverse as are the practices of different cultures.

Are such differences entirely environmental? Do they constitute local divergencies from a primal universality of temporal, spatial and causal perception founded (as Kant supposed) on the very structure of the human psyche? Is all transmission of "reality-conventions" cultural, or can such historically acquired characteristics as our sense of causality, time-flow, and three-dimensional space be in some way genetically coded and transmitted? We do not know, but Lamarckian metaphors are again active.

This study of human experience and practice as convention, as a set of signals and "cultural phonemes," characterises much of what is at present most fashionable, but also most interesting, in the life of ideas. It relates, at least by metaphoric suggestion, the Crick-Watson account of the genetic code to the linguistic analyses of Noam Chomsky. It underlies both Marshall McLuhan's notion of the changes in human perception which follow on the changes in the nature and transmission of information and Lévi-Strauss' work on the codified structures of man's imagination, myths, and sciences. The belief that "reality" is largely social convention is as marked in Foucault's *Histoire de la folie* as it is in the argument of the new generation of historians of science that "empirical" discoveries are closely bound up with the verbal metaphors and psychological expectations current in a society at any given moment in its

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history. We see what we have been taught ("programmed") to look for. We find what we have been prepared to see.

THE WRITINGS OF E. H. Gombrich are very much a part of this general direction of insight. In *Art and Illusion* (1962) and numerous beautifully composed and argued essays, Professor Gombrich has set forth, often with deliberate courtesy to the layman, what art historians, certainly since Wölfflin, have increasingly realised: that the history of art is, centrally, the history of previous art. Discrediting, with a rare elegance of style and wit, the layman's preconceptions about the artist's "eye," Professor Gombrich has shown in numerous cases how the thing seen is the thing as seen by previous art. Constable's vision of a field is not a vision of some neutral organic terrain, of a natural *Ding an sich*. It is a vision initiated by stylistic expectations about what is to be looked at and for; it is informed in its organisation of colour and mass, in its placing of objects and sensory values by the art of Reynolds. What Goya actually *saw* in the riot-torn streets of Madrid no historian of art, no psychologist, can ever reconstruct. But what Goya *reproduced* when he came to organise and communicate his vision in the public medium of art can be closely related to the conventionalised code of human gesture and facial expression, to the habits of coloration and formal composition established in the paintings of his predecessors and contemporaries. Raphael translating a motif from an antique sarcophagus or Picasso rephrasing a composition by Velasquez are performing acts of vision crucial to the nature and history of art. They are communicating meaning not by way of some solitary, idiosyncratic idiom (which would be all but *invisible*) but by the use and enrichment of a vocabulary already established. The naked eye is essentially blind; artistic vision is shared convention. Or as Reynolds put it in his Sixth Discourse: "It is in vain for painters or poets to endeavour to invent without materials on which the mind may work."

Norm and Form is a collection of papers previously published in art journals or delivered at various academic occasions.[1] They focus Professor Gombrich's general theme of the relations between tradition and the individual talent on the "Renaissance climate of opinion about art and . . . influence this climate has exerted on both the practice and the criticism of art." Almost every essay reflects some aspect of the use by Renaissance painters and sculptors of the conventions arising from the imitation of the antique and from the rhetorical conception, based ultimately on classic aesthetics and Vitruvius, of painting as a Liberal Art. A key article, "The Style *all'antica*: Imitation and Assimilation," examines the entire relationship, both concordant and dialectical, between the individual response of the artist and the ideal of an exemplary model, of habits and economies of expression codified by a classic precedent. In "The Renaissance Theory of Art and the Rise of Landscape," one of the most subtly argued and satisfying of all his statements, Professor Gombrich shows how the very notion of landscape as "subject" has behind it a history of theoretic preparation going back to Pliny, how the "idea" precedes and makes actual the process of visual discovery. It is not some sudden sight of an alpine scene which leads to the emergence of the landscape genre in Flemish painting. It is a process of imaginative stylisation and psychological recognition (almost in the sense of diplomatic "recognition") of motifs prepared for in the theory of art and in the background and scenic context of 16th-century painting:

> In other words, I believe that the idea of natural beauty as an inspiration of art, the idea which underlies Pino's no less than more sophisticated writings, is, to say the least, a very dangerous over-simplification. Perhaps it even reverses the actual process by which man discovers the beauty of nature. We call a scenery "picturesque" . . . if it reminds us of paintings we have seen. And to the painter, in turn, nothing can become a "motif" except what he can assimilate into the vocabulary he has already learned.

Nature does not, perhaps, imitate art; but it becomes "Nature" through art.

A paper on "Leonardo's Method of Working Out Compositions" leads to a suggestion of considerable philosophic and poetic reach. Professor Gombrich discusses the logical and technical flaw in Leonardo's dream of total artistic invention. Not only are even the most extravagant of the mind's fantasies grounded in a re-arrangement or manipulation of natural phenomena, but two-eyed human vision will always perceive the difference between a flat surface and a thing in the round. But it may precisely have been Leonardo's failure to construct a new universe which inspired the terrifying visions of deluge and chaos which he drew in his old age. In these spiralling shapes of universal ruin we read the "truly titanic tensions" between Leonardo's aspiration to re-create the world through art and his realisation that this could not be done.

Norm and Form closes with a paper showing how the conception and composition of Reynolds' *Three Ladies adorning a Term of Hymen* can be understood as a translation of motifs and executive conventions established in a

[1] Phaidon Press, 47s. 6d.

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woodcut illustrating a pseudo-classical romance of the Quattrocento, in Poussin's *Dance of Nymphs*, in Rubens' *Nature attired by the Three Graces*, and in Reynolds' own sketch from an anonymous *Rape of Proserpina*. It is a characteristically lucid and fascinating piece of Gombrich decoding: "The two worlds of portraiture and of history, of realism and imagination are held in perfect, if precarious, balance."

As ONE READS these urbane essays, two worries obtrude. The first concerns the precision and finality of Professor Gombrich's detections. He himself stresses the ubiquity of formal conventions, the shaping pervasiveness of the climate in which the artist works. Yet almost unconsciously, owing to the sheer incisiveness and economy of their argument, these analyses tend to locate a single lineage for a painting, a single source and tradition of re-statement for a plastic motif, an almost one-to-one concordance between a poetic text and a pictorial representation. The problem here is similar to that posed by the all too uniform register of Coleridge's imaginative sources in Livingston Lowes' *Road to Xanadu*. Donatello's *Miracle of the Wrathful Son* and Pietro Paolo de Antonisio's *St. Peter Raising the Lame Man* do seem to re-use the figure of a man falling from horseback as shown on Trajan's Column. But might Donatello not have been equally or more immediately inspired by a similar figure, that of a horseman whose leg is being actually pulled as he falls, in a *Combattimento fra Fausti e Centauri* now at the Vatican Museum (I owe this example to Professor Horst Janson of New York University)? Why a single source? And can we ever be certain, especially when dealing with an eye as swift to seize a hint and make inventory as is that of a great artist?

The second worry is more fundamental. Few art historians have asked as penetratingly or with as wide a range of philosophic awareness, what is the history of art? Why should art have a history at all? Few have refuted more effectively any simplistic answers based on the Hegelian *Zeitgeist* or accidents of untutored genius. Yet for all the acuteness of his questioning and critique, Professor Gombrich does leave the matter essentially perplexing. Given the shaping spirit of convention and the self-perpetuating nature of style, why should the history of art in fact be filled with revolutionary changes? How do the great metamorphoses of perception come about? When Professor Gombrich comes near the heart of the question, his argument tends to be uncharacteristically vague or rhetorical:

> What enabled Raphael and his pupils to generalise on their knowledge of a few ancient monuments and create the dazzling variety of

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> the Loggie? . . . It may be well to remember that if we could answer this question with precision we could build a robot Raphael.

It is not a "precise answer" that is wanting, but a conceptual framework in which the "making new" of art would have a more natural and dynamic role. "The utterly strange and bewildering art of Hieronymus Bosch," writes Professor Gombrich. Is there a place for it in his grammar of rational unfolding?

NOT THAT THE GENIUS of Bosch was without its stylistic roots. As Professor De Tolnay points out, in this sumptuous re-issue of his 1937 monograph,[2] the art of Bosch has its distinct provincial origins. The carved figures on the Gothic cathedral of St. John's in 's Hertogenbosch clearly prefigure Bosch's manner. Nevertheless the master's "technique and style evolved neither from a school tradition which he took over or developed, nor from an alien technique which he made his own. . . . The creator of a style of his own, he stands isolated in his period."

Hieronymus Bosch is one of that decisive group of painters—Giotto, Rembrandt, Turner, Cézanne, Braque—who have created visual totalities which are intensely personal yet so powerfully and richly translated into expressive form that they add to and alter the repertoire of sight, of significant visual recognition and location in western culture. They have done so by finding ways through which to externalise what was in each of them an internal space. All men spatialise internally and perform the act of perception through a conventional adjustment of external stimuli and internal constructs. The internal spatialisation in a sensibility such as Bosch's or Cézanne's is so detailed, so finely structured, that it translates the outside world wholly into its own values and focus. It is not a new window on to the "outside world" that the revolutionary painter opens for us; it is a window into his own consciousness, a consciousness so coherent and expressive that we come to recognise in it alternative ways of seeing and feeling, that we borrow from it, that we learn to experience aspects of our own conventional reality in the new ordering given them by the artist. This is the meaning of the formula used about Bosch already in the 17th century: "others sought to paint man as he is outside—but he alone had the courage to paint him as he is inside." Or to use Professor De Tolnay's terms, Bosch came to grips with "the true mainsprings of the inner life in the depths of the unconscious."

Today, after psycho-analysis, Surrealism, and Dada, it is nearly too easy to *see* Bosch and to write about him. Like Tiepolo, or Goya in his last phase, Bosch speaks all too plainly to our present expectations. This fluency is heightened by the superb reproduction of details, by the photographic isolation of a single motif or passage of paint in this lavishly produced and documented book. Taken out of the total context of the triptych, dissociated from the form and function of an altarpiece, the Art-Nouveau flora of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, the Graham Sutherland angularity and desolation of the crucifixion on the reverse side of the *St. John on Patmos*, the pale dream-city on the high horizon of the *Adoration of the Magi*, almost like a Steinberg drawing in some of its solid insubstantiality, press on one with an insistence of modernity, of prophetic relevance. In the central panel of the *Garden* we make out precisely that representation of modern sexual accidie which Burroughs aims for with cruder means. Here are all erotic possibilities, the Negro belly against the white, the flower sprouting from the anus, lips searching out the gate of the womb. Over this profusion of sensuous trial plays a strange cool light. The eyes of the naked are full of absence, of captivity in a freedom too great. Those who plummet into damnation, whose bodies are impaled on the harp-strings of Hell (Cocteau's *Blood of a Poet* is like a footnote to Bosch), are at least engaged in being, however hideous. Again we experience this contrast with a fierce psychological actuality.

Professor De Tolnay rejects the well-known theory of Wilhelm Fraenger that Bosch belonged to the heretical sect of the Brethren of the Free Spirit and that the iconography of his paintings is a strict illustration of the beliefs of its Grand Master, Jacob van Almangien. There is no evidence to support such a theory and the notion of Bosch as "illustrator" is obviously inadequate. Mysteries do remain: how is one to "read" the haunting *Marriage at Cana* in which only one figure attends to the miracle of transubstantiation while all others seem caught in a spell of magic or indifference? But such riddles point to the immense originality of Bosch's response to the world. The text and plates of this volume allow one to look at this response more fully than ever before. The primary paradox of great painting and of change in art history emerge with great force. The great painter shows us a sight which is new—we have never *seen* it before, we have not selected it from the total range of possible vision, we have not experienced through eye and hand this particular roundedness and *thisness* of two apples in a blue dish—but which is also in some deep sense familiar. We have dreamt of places that Bosch has visited. His visit has freed our dreams. He reminds us.

[2] *Hieronymus Bosch*. By CHARLES DE TOLNAY. Methuen, 15 gns.

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Strange Contemporaries

Wallace Stevens and Hart Crane — By FRANK KERMODE

"...that such a person is to be visualised as an idler, a man without clothes, a drunk, or in any way as an eccentric or a person somehow manqué is nonsense. The contemporary poet is simply a contemporary man who writes poetry. He looks like anyone else, acts like anyone else, wears the same kind of clothes, and is certainly not an incompetent."

THIS IS the well-known insurance-lawyer-bard of Hartford, lecturing a young poet. He had proved his point in his own life, delaying poetry until he was secure in business and then, when the time came, in his mid-thirties, writing "Sunday Morning," which is not only his most famous but almost his first poem. When Stevens wrote this letter Hart Crane, though he was born while Stevens was editing the *Harvard Advocate*, had already been dead for years. Crane left school at fifteen, was eccentric, drunk and idle, *manqué* enough to drown himself at thirty-two. He was the kind of poet Stevens probably didn't want to know about; had he waited as long to get started he would have written nothing at all, and for all the notice Stevens takes of him in his large correspondence he might as well not have bothered. Now the letters of these strange contemporaries appear at the same time.[1] As to which of them was the more *maudit* there is no serious question; but if it is a competition in being *manqué* Stevens may, surprising though it seems, find some backers.

The Crane letters (which are, for the English reader, somewhat under-annotated) are much the more direct and personal. When somebody asked Stevens if the "much-crumpled thing" of "*Le Monocle de mon Oncle*" was "sex-appeal" he was told that the poet would need to change a lot before he let *that* past the front fence. Crane has no front fence; he talks about his sailors, about his complicated relationship with his divorced mother and his fluctuating contempt for his well-off father. At 21 he was "engrossed in erotic experience" as well as in Dostoevsky. He lived at a great rate intellectually as well as emotionally, and what surprises us is not the abandon of his life, or his frankness, but the fact that it was possible for him —without much formal education—to embark in his teens on the life of the full-time intellectual. At seventeen he was in New York studying Latin, German and philosophy, in the interests of emotional balance and exactness of expression: "my life shall have expression and form." But he was soon back in Cleveland and working in a drug-store belonging to his father; and if these letters did nothing else they would cause some of us to revise drastically our notions about the cultural possibilities open to a Cleveland soda-jerk in 1921. There was no time-lag in his acquaintance with the new poetry; he read Pound and Stevens ("a man whose work makes the rest of us quail"), and he was so inward with the early Eliot that when *The Waste Land* came out he found it a falling off. (Later he intended *The Bridge* to be somehow a counterpoise to Eliot's modernist pessimism.) There were people in Cleveland with whom he could discuss his own writings, people who knew about Joyce, De Gourmont, Gordon Craig, Laforgue, Li Po, Dante, and Nietzsche, Crane's programme was saturation: "one must be drenched in words... to have the right ones form themselves into the proper pattern at the right moment." In Cleveland, partly because of the orchestra, partly because of the little magazines, such programmes were not as absurd as they might have been, say, in the north of England at the same date.

Crane was a prodigious boy, corresponding with the great, writing with extraordinary penetration on other poets; but he felt he belonged to Cleveland. Of course he soon went back to New York, it could hardly have been avoided; and then began the debauchery, the borrowing, the quarrelling, the travel, that are more conventionally associated with this kind of poet. *The Bridge*, first mentioned in 1923, dominated the remainder of his life, throwing him alternately into misery and exaltation. Under conditions he could never allow to be propitious he sought tension and clarity—his motto, from Donne, was "make my dark poem light." He wanted to avoid the "wilfully obscure and esoteric." These intelligent and desperate letters are about how he and the world prevented the

[1] *Letters of Wallace Stevens*. Selected and edited by Holly Stevens. Faber, 7 gns. Knopf, N.Y., $17.50. *Letters of Hart Crane, 1916–1932*. Edited by Brom Weber. Cambridge, 40s. University of California Press, $6.

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fulfilment of these ambitions. Writing in Cuba he speaks with horror of the way both poetry and despair are becoming institutionalised, hating the way poets were taken up, hating the "fashionable pessimism," recognising a stage of civilisation destructive of poetry. "Rimbaud was the last great poet our civilisation will see." Occasionally his single-handed war with the world looks, at this distance, funny, as in the long account of his quarrel with the Tates, or even in some poses he strikes: "Let my lusts be my ruin . . . since all else is fake and mockery." But although we may prefer other tones—the patient explanations of *The Bridge* he sent his patron, Otto Kahn, or stories of sailors and gaolers—there emerges as perfectly authentic a sense of achievement related to and qualified by self-destructiveness. To his friend Allen Tate, Crane was, simply, heroic: "out of the desperate conditions of his life—which included almost unimaginable horrors of depravity and perversity of will—he produced in the end a shining exemplum of human dignity—his poetry. . . ."

Crane's house was never quiet, his world never still; expression and form were rarely to be fused, either in calm or in passionate stress. His lucidity ran into catachresis, his dark poem is lit only by flickering lights. Stevens is often obscure—he shares with Crane and other American poets a proprietary attitude to language, easily admitting nonce-words and neologisms, leaving the reader with a certain Shakespearian loftiness, to do the final working out. But he would never have addressed a bridge as "thou steeled Cognizance" or say that wine "narrows the mustard scansion of the eyes," or sound sometimes like a hotted-up Francis Thompson, any more than he would ever have found himself in gaol, or indeed abroad. Yet a reader who came upon Stevens via some broody mumbling poem of the middle period, and then found confirmation, in a biography consisting so largely of refusals and withdrawals, for his view that Stevens was a man of low vitality, might well ridicule the statement that he is a much more important poet than Crane, at least as ambitious and finally very much stranger.

THE EARLY LETTERS and journals of Stevens show a most private man, a self-cramped man or a man who gave everything time to mature. Long-breathed speculation preceded decisions: whether to become "a money-making lawyer," to marry, or to write poems. He decided, he says, that fact must be met with fact; if "life is worth living under certain conditions," these conditions involved the postponement of poetry. As it happened, business success and poetry came together, as if providence were ready to comply with such planning. There is nothing in the letters to explain how Stevens, who wrote no poetry worth preserving before he was thirty, should suddenly have written "Peter Quince at the Clavier" and "Sunday Morning." One can only guess: among the things he wanted most were a home (where he could cackle in the Stevens environment, as "toucans in the place of toucans") and "an authentic fluent speech." Hartford became the place of this toucan's cackling; but any other one place, if well-protected, might have done. Later, as he reasoned of these things "with a later reason," Stevens called the "place dependent on ourselves" Catawba. It was the mind and reality who married there, and "they married well because the marriage-place was what they loved." Catawba might be New Haven on an ordinary evening or Hartford in a purple light or the Tennessee in which he invested nothing but a jar; a place where the mind matches the world on equal ground. Catawba "was neither heaven nor hell," but it was a good place to start the war or marriage between the mind and sky.

SEEN FROM the outside, Stevens is quietly absurd. The poet of gaudiness, of pungent colour and exotic shape, was a sort of Hartford Des Esseintes. Des Esseintes' trip to London ended with a bottle of stout on a foggy night at Calais. For Stevens, Europe was a daydream about Paris, a postcard from Basel; and China a box of tea or a packet of jasmine solicited from travellers. His ephebes were exotic youths: a Korean poet, a Cuban scholar. He looked forward especially to the letters of Thomas McGreevy, with whom he could share his distaste for "Ireland's neighbour," and of Leonard C. van Geyzel, an Englishman expatriate in Ceylon, who might not only feed one's daydreams but supply "the very best tea procurable." The plum survives its poems, as Stevens remarked; but whether he, as poet, could have withstood the abrasions of genuine travel without losing his bloom is a question. The world's gaudy Cockaigne for him was Florida, with Cuba and the banana-islands over the horizon. His sense of place—the Rome of the Santayana poem, the Florence of the dead Englishman—have the same reality as Haddam, where the thin men live, or New Haven, or Oklahoma where the firecat bristled and Bonnie and Josie danced round a stump—his sense of place has an accuracy in respect of the imagination only. While his rich friends the Churches divided their year between New York and Paris, he sat it out in Hartford, working through the summer, dictating insurance letters and philosophical poems, lunching at the Canoe Club, and walking home in the evening to whatever might be "the combination of the moment,"

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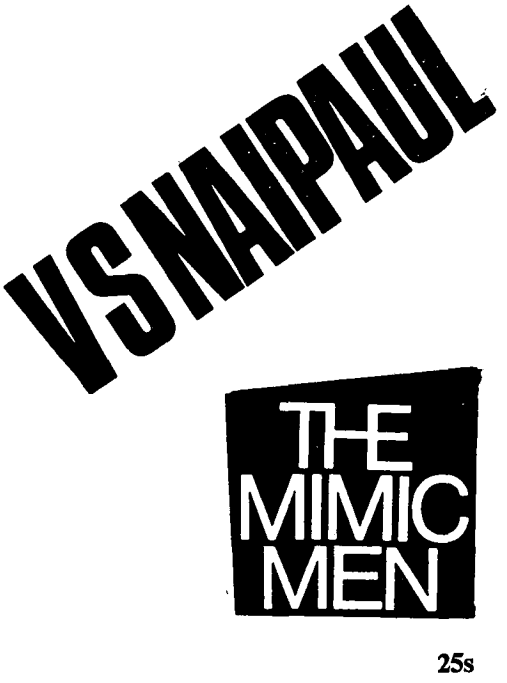
for example Berlioz and roses. After that, whatever books he might choose to read (he says he has time to read whatever he wants) and letters to and from, say, a Paris bookseller, or a Yale student writing an *explication* of "Sea Surface Full of Clouds." It might take such a man to see that the final truth about poetry is the fictiveness of the entire world; save for a mythic core of "reality" the world is poetry, and there to be discoverd, as desperate and virginal in Hartford or New Haven as anywhere else.

Lawrence once wrote remarkably about the umbrella of fictions with which we keep out the intolerable hot diversity of chaos. For him the original artist was the one who tore holes in the umbrella, so that human life and chaos were for a moment in contact; but the rent was soon mended with another more comfortable fiction, and the need is for a succession of umbrella-tearers who will not let us dismiss all that inhuman fortuity from our lives. Stevens is the poet of that umbrella, but also of the *Blick ins Chaos*, to remember which is to be aware of poetry. (The man who so dreaded poverty in its more physical form had an acute apprehension of the more metaphysical poverty which is our lot without poetry: "money," he once wrote, "is a kind of poetry.") In the '30s the "pressure of reality" was particularly hard on the umbrella, and Stevens' attempt to meet it in the political form it then took was *Owl's Clover*, a self-confessed failure. The letters of the succeeding period, especially in the war years, silently celebrate the increase in reality's pressure by a steady concentration on the theory of poetry. "The theory of poetry is the theory of life." These are only apparently hermit musings, and it is not really surprising that Stevens reached his most authentic and fluent speech in poetry at such a moment; *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction* belongs to 1942. The subject is what human beings must add to the plain sense of things, in order to make of the world something that suffices. The more desperate the world's poverty, the harder and the more private the poet's job. A man who does such a job well might be represented as a rabbi or a soldier, or simply as major man; but what he makes *is* a kind of poetry, and so, not necessarily but actually, the task falls to poets, and poetry is the supreme fiction, major man is a poet. Poetry is as pure and as impure as life, as reasonable and as unreasonable. Whatever is well said about poetry is well said about life. So, in his entirely solitary way, proceeding at his own slow pace toward the truth about human fiction, Stevens earned the right to regard any meditation, any half-worked out "and yet" or "as if," as a contribution to the great subject, the



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human meaning of an ordinary evening in Connecticut when beyond the mental umbrella there is chaos, the sun is meaningless except by our gift, and all the gods are dead. The subject matter of poetry is "the aspects of the world and of men and women that have been added to them by poetry": everything that is human or humanised.

This gives him a right to his arbitrary musing, and as rabbi (both learned and understanding poverty) he arrogates the further right to be aloofly allegorical and to go on with his thinking just so long as he chooses, without regard to the unschooled who may not follow. If you were puzzled by the Arabian in *Notes*:

> *At night an Arabian in my room,*
> *With his damned hoobla-hoobla-hoobla-how,*
> *Inscribes a primitive astronomy*
>
> *Across the unscrawled fores the future casts*
> *And throws his stars around the floor—*

you could write to Mr. Stevens, and he would write back and tell you that the Arabian is the moon, adding that "the reader could not possibly know this. However, I did not think it necessary for him to know." On the other hand, he thinks that when he uses the word "tanks" in a context suggesting Ceylon, the reader should know exactly what he means without being told. Extremely obliging in his response to letters of enquiry, he often remarks that his correspondents are mistaken not only in thinking that his poetry is plainer to him than to them but also, and habitually, in thinking that what integrates a poem is *ideas*. "A poem must have a peculiarity, as if it were the momentarily complete idiom of that which prompts it." Newton Stallknecht very neatly called Stevens' poetry "a poetry of philosophical *intention*"—not, that is, of philosophical execution. It is useless to seek in it a simple bonding of ideas. "One can do nothing in art by being reasonable . . . it is also true that one can do nothing by being unreasonable." Hence that range of uniquely philosophical poetry—a different thing, as Coleridge noted, from philosophy and also from poetry simply considered—in which he ranges from a kind of intense meditative mumble to a declarative candour which also, on examination, defies paraphrase. Only thus can one do the work of the dead gods, and create the "Extraordinary Actuality."

It is unlikely that Stevens ever really felt the criticism that all this is wildly out of touch with what most people have in mind when, "in the metaphysical streets of the physical town," they hear "the actual horns of baker and butcher." He wanted to be the consort of the Queen of Fact. When Church was still thinking about founding a Chair of Poetry at Princeton, Stevens advised him that the right man to fill it would be someone who could deal with actuality without referring to poetry at all. Such a man, he said was Hemingway—"a poet . . . and I should say offhand, the most significant of living poets, so far as the subject of Extraordinary Actuality is concerned." A Hemingway hero must have seemed a much better image of metaphysical poverty than an Appalachian farmer or an Abyssinian "coon."

After the '30s Stevens gave up the attempt to compete with other theories of poverty and reality; he simply went on with his own. That is why the letters of 1942 ignore the reality that was going on in Germany, in Russia and in the Pacific, even the warships clustered at New London on his own Connecticut River. He writes instead about "the order of the spirit" which "is the only music of the spheres: or rather, the only music"; about how a private press should print his book ("Light tan linen or buckram cover"); about his Dutch ancestors. Just as "poverty" became for him a purely metaphysical concept, so did war. His was the primal war "between the mind and sky"; his soldier was simply another figure of the youth as a virile poet. Even his "fat girl, terrestrial, my summer, my night" is, he explains, the earth, "what the politicians are calling the globe," and what he thinks of as the irreducible reality where all poetry (all humanity) begins. Stevens commits himself to the biggest of all as-ifs; he behaves as if poetry and the imagination are everything that is humanly important (and therefore everything that is at all important). Consequently he felt himself to be dealing incessantly with *the real*.

The philosophy of this was not for him to work out, only to brood over. Though he says that "supreme poetry can be produced only at the highest level of the cognitive," he also holds that the kind of thinking it required is distinct from that required by philosophising because it is "a creation not of meaning but of points," welcoming fortuity and logical imprecision, devoted not to clarity of expression ("what I intended is nothing") but to the blooding of abstractions. It adds to the vulgate of experience an "and yet." So does metaphysics; but he insists that his work has "no serious contact with philosophy." Stevens acknowledged an interest in Santayana, James, and Bergson, but his reading was patchy and never deep. He knew *about* Heidegger but not, apparently, even *about* Wittgenstein. When Paul Weiss asked him why he didn't take on a full-sized philosopher he replied with his usual epistolary calm, quite untouched by the criticism. Philosophy, like many other things, was his business only

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when it suited him to make it so. It became a part of his authentic and fluent speech, but it isn't surprising that when he sent his "Collect of Philosophy" to a learned journal it was rejected.

MANY OF THESE LETTERS are written as part of the para-philosophical game. The correspondents are not, as a rule, confidants; there is a certain reserve even with old friends, though the old gaudiness so personal to Stevens flashes out in letters to the young, and there is an occasional letter, like the one to Harvey Breit about the Dutch Church at Kingston—printed in ENCOUNTER last October—which have an uncovenanted and dazzling philosophical wit. Often he is just thinking on paper, as in some poems. The long letter to a congenial correspondent, and the long poem, suited his mental style. "Some people always know exactly what they think. I am afraid that I am not one of those people. The same thing keeps active in my mind and rarely becomes fixed." As letters these are not obliged to be agreeable or self-consistent; but for anybody who knows the poetry they are very revealing, they do enhance one's familiarity with the drift of Stevens' meditation—its hidden structure of seasons, fictions, human fear, its bursts of gratuitous and generous happiness, as when a Norwegian girl poet calls at Hartford. They even suggest a queer kind of heroism, as if the refusal to condone poverty, to care for men in the mass, were a necessary aspect of that attempt to identify poetry and humanity, to be "major man."

In the long run, I think, these letters will stand as classic specimens of the preoccupations of modern poetry for such reasons as these, rather than for the direct light they throw upon actual poems. When one comes first to the book, the most obviously exciting letters are those in which Stevens, with extraordinary good humour and candour, and against the whole bent of modern practitioners, gives his own interpretations of certain poems; most remarkably there are many pages on *Notes toward a Supreme Fiction*. The interest of these is of course exceptional, and yet the comments are not, in the end, very helpful. Where the language of a poem is extraordinary, arbitrary, Stevens simply incorporates it into his paraphrases, "practising mere repetitions," or he says he can't remember, perhaps never knew. There are certainly hints on how to read the poems, but surprisingly little help with detail.

"The object, of course," he says of "An Ordinary Evening," "is to purge oneself of anything false." He wanted to get out of the poem

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1872-1914

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and himself all the left-overs of past imagining. In this sense he was tremendously modern; he was not interested in poetry as "an aspect of history" but as a conjunction, appropriate to its moment, of the mind and its place, a world essentially indifferent. If the gods die, and statues grow rigid, what can be hoped for poems? But against this self-destructive emphasis on the ephemerality of the modern poem he built up his own world, in which there are to be found relations to some extent proof against time. Everything was implicit in *Harmonium*, and he saw it as a programme, wanting to call it *The Grand Poem: Preliminary Minutiae*. When he finally consented to a collected edition he did so only when he felt something had been completed, and he wanted to call it *The Whole of Harmonium*. Having felt a bit chilly towards *Harmonium* in the years after its publication in 1923, he came to admire again in his late years its unpredictable certainties, its strange rightnesses, the way it confirmed later poems. The *Collected Poems* do make a "total edifice" and an enduring meditation. There is a lot of squiggling, marginalia, meta-metaphysical muttering, pointlessness, wantonness, the tedium of small private sub-jokes and sub-thoughts, and these will serve to defend Stevens' thesis of necessary obsolescence, the inevitable decline of imaginative objects into absurdity. But for all its fortuity and decay *The Whole of Harmonium* looks pretty permanent, indeed "a shining exemplum of human dignity," from "Plowing on Sunday" to "The Rock." An exile from most of the world, and from most of the people about him who would have been equal to his imaginative demands, he showed that exile, if necessary, may be had without departures, without fuss. The letters often show one how the polite hermit kept out the world, hoarded the passions and the poet's scholarship that a more orthodox life such as Crane's had to dissipate. Of course Stevens is not the great modern poet anybody could have predicted, but great poetry has often been surprising in its time. To undervalue him because he seems so wantonly not to fit the milieu or the moment is still a common error, just as it is to overvalue him because he thinks. Rightly seen he is, in his shy, egotistical remoteness, very central to the whole idea of modern poetry; and these letters, carefully edited by his daughter, will help us to see him rightly.

The Memorable Scenes of Mr. Boswell

By Paul Fussell

THE SPIRIT of James Boswell lurks in the least likely places. Consider the art dealer Ambroise Vollard, depicted by Jean Renoir in the act of "interviewing" Renoir *père*:

> He had a talent for putting his adversary off the scent by asking idiotic questions, half naïve, half specially fabricated. For example: "Tell me, Monsieur Renoir: what are bloomers for?" Renoir: "For horses." He began every sentence with a "Tell me." "Tell me, Monsieur Renoir: why is the Eiffel Tower built of iron, and not of stone like the Tower of Pisa?" "Tell me, Monsieur Renoir: why don't they have bull-fights in Switzerland? With all those cows, you know. . . ."

And Tom Driberg [ENCOUNTER, May 1966] unwittingly discloses Boswell up to his old tricks at one of Edith Sitwell's evenings. A guest was once

> Dr. Frank Buchman, founder of Moral Rearmament, then in its early days as the Oxford Group. [Geoffrey] Gorer teased Buchman a good deal, and after Gorer had left, Buchman insisted that his hostess should join him in prayer for Gorer's conversion and in seeking divine guidance on the best means of bringing this about. Edith said afterwards that she disliked being forced to her knees and also disliked Buchman's handshake, which she found clammy.

Driberg asks: "Who can have been so inept as to bring Buchman to Edith's flat? Gorer thinks it was 'a young Scotsman.' Whoever it was, it is unlikely that he was asked again."

Wherever social "scenes" are not only enacted but sparked and stage-managed, there harbours the spirit of Boswell. Wherever calculated encounters between notorious incompatibles leave interesting little ripples of hostility and embarrassment behind, there Boswell chiefly lives.

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For he is much more than a case. He is a type, and it is the special privilege of types to indulge themselves in successive metempsychoses. He is the eternal fixer and manager and inquirer, and whenever he is present, Bouvard and Pécuchet are never far away.

The modernity of the man is incredible. He is after all the inventor of that peculiarly contemporary minor literary form, the "interview," especially the "hard" as opposed to the "soft" kind. Here the straight-faced interviewer poses the most vexing questions to elicit the maximum rise from his subject and thus guarantee the most dynamic copy: "If, Sir, you were shut up in a castle, and a newborn child with you, what would you do?" "Pray, Sir, can you tell me why an apple is round and a pear pointed?" "When we were alone, I introduced the subject of death. . . ." Even the with-it inquisitors of the *Paris Review* have been unable to improve on Boswell's technique:

> INTERVIEWER: Would you admit to there being symbolism in your novels?
>
> HEMINGWAY: I suppose there are symbols because critics keep finding them. If you do not mind I dislike talking about them and being questioned about them. It is hard enough to write books and stories without being asked to explain them as well.

Boswell is also one of us in his sexual ambitiousness and self-consciousness. Except for Boswell, few before the age of Dr. Kinsey and Wilhelm Reich can have bothered to record for posterity the number of their sequential orgasms on given occasions. Pepys and William Hickey sometimes come close to Boswell in erotic frankness, but their enjoyments of the flesh are not, like Boswell's, a function of the delights of documentation. It took the 20th century to sense as an imperative the keeping of records attesting to full genitality, and, as in so much else, Boswell was there first. In his urge to spill all the beans in writing, he anticipated those contemporary American sexual novelists whose total fictional stock in trade is the history and mythology of their own divorces. "I have a kind of strange feeling," Boswell once wrote, "as if I wished nothing to be secret that concerns myself."

Very forward-looking, too, is his constant pursuit of "authenticity" both in his own experience and in his recording of it. When he carefully spreads his paper on the very slab covering the body of Melancthon while writing about it to Johnson, he is engaged in prefiguring the whole modern world of "documentary." And his sense of the necessity, and even the seemliness, of full literary publicity is our sense. He knows that the age of anonymous publication is past and that personality never hurt any

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piece of writing. He knows that any book succeeds only as it catches its audience in the correct receptive posture, prepared for relish by all the arts of reputation and publicity. He thus did not let his Corsican book drop among those unprepared to consider it interesting: he provided the context for the book by puffing it himself and by making certain that everyone knew beforehand what a valuable and interesting person he was. The purpose of an author, as not only Boswell but also Johnson knew, is to be read. And Boswell was read: as Frederick A. Pottle says in his recent biographical study,[1]

> By the publication of *An Account of Corsica* Boswell became at twenty-seven a literary figure of international reputation. . . . For a certain period of time far more people knew about him than knew about Goldsmith or Johnson.

[1] *James Boswell: The Earlier Years* (Heinemann, London, and McGraw-Hill, New York, 84s. and $12.50). This volume of 606 pages is merely the first half. Pottle is now working on the second in collaboration with Frank Brady.

[2] *The Literary Career of James Boswell, Esq.: Being the Bibliographical Materials for a Life of Boswell.* Clarendon Press, 1929; reissued, 1965, 55s.

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Pottle has been meditating a biography of Boswell for well over thirty years, ever since his exemplary "bio-bibliography" of 1929,[2] where his focus, happily, was on Boswell not as a prodigy of fatuity but as an author. No one knows Boswell like Pottle, and his decades of intimacy with his subject have brought him just the right approach, an approach at once affectionate and ironic. Unpretentiousness is Pottle's charm, as well as a readiness to take the low road when appropriate. He speaks of Boswell's "Holland act"; people in his book "blab" and "guzzle" and "tattle." And his scholarly candour is as refreshing as his language.

What must constitute a rare moment in contemporary scholarship is his thus characterising one of his own early essays on Boswell, written in 1925: ". . . ill-informed and inaccurate, to be used with great care. . . ." No one can come to grips with Boswell at all who does not have a bent for quiet—very quiet—irony, and here Pottle is gifted. "Boswell's sight-seeing in Paris was surprisingly restricted and conventional: he felt an obligation to explore it diligently on its wicked side only." Again, speaking of Boswell's new sobriety in Utrecht, Pottle says: "Even his schemes for publication took their colour from the new and sober pattern of his life, became in fact quite Dutch."

But if style is Pottle's merit, structure is his defect. The trouble with his biography is that it has no dynamics: it starts at the "beginning" and proceeds doggedly onward, emphasising everything equally. Why must a biography so rigorously enslave itself to chronology? Why can't it operate like other works of art and find its own kind of order for the job at hand? If the claims of chronology must be recognised, they can be recognised in the notes, or in an appendix. Why not organise a biography by themes or motifs? Or at least why not use the beginning for the most interesting matter and present the hero's ancestry and birth—almost always the least interesting thing about him—in a less conspicuous part of the book? Boswell was luckier in writing the *Life of Johnson* than Pottle has been in writing the life of Boswell. He knew less about his hero's earlier years, and fortune, if not art, compelled him to skimp that early part of Johnson's life for which documentation was relatively scarce. Thus the full emphasis falls on the rich, adult years beginning at 1763, when Boswell and Johnson (then fifty-four) met. The important part becomes the longest part. What is wanting in Pottle's book, despite its liveliness of texture and its civilised tone, is simply the appearance of art. It is devoid of proportioning: its total shape is a large blob.

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POTTLE's Boswell, for all his gaucherie and conceit, is essentially a writer. When a human type becomes a writer of such urgency that he invents a major genre, he is doubly destined to persist:

> *Time . . .*
> *Worships language and forgives*
> *Everyone by whom it lives;*
> *Pardons cowardice, conceit,*
> *Lays its honours at their feet.*

His great work is his life-long journal, out of which he carved and fashioned the Johnsonian books. These, especially the *Life of Johnson,* established the modern genre of the excessively full literary biography, overweight, obsessively "authentic," minutely detailed. A characteristic of the genre is that no one can work in it without ceding his identity to his subject, without becoming forever the creature of his author. A degree of obsession is inseparable from the genre; other characteristics are exhaustion, intemperate documentation, and a certain artistic numbness induced by an overwhelming excess of matter. Newman Ivey White's *Shelley,* Leslie Marchand's *Byron,* Richard Ellmann's *Joyce,* Mark Schorer's *Sinclair Lewis,* Pottle's *Boswell* —these weighty biographies, so typical of the 20th century in their stunning lack of measure, constitute a large part of the legacy of Boswell.

Boswell wrote a journal in the first place because he was a natural writer and because, as Pottle suggests, "The accepted public genres of [his] day offered him none that quite suited him." Here he was entirely unlike Johnson, who gloried in the current genres—periodical essay, oriental tale, preface to Shakespeare—and who found in their conventions all he needed to release his own individual talent. If we knew less about Boswell, we might easily assume that his main motive in scribbling about his life and contacts with the Great was a mere lust for personal publicity. But Hume, who knew him, perceived that his ruling passion was "a rage for literature." He was a published writer by the age of 19, and he grew to become the most conspicuous ornament on the list of the house of Edward and Charles Dilly, publishers also of Bowles, Cumberland, Dr. Parr, Samuel Rogers, and Southey.

Boswell's invention of a modern genre is fine enough. Perhaps even more fine is his stylistic achievement. In an age when prose offered almost irresistible temptations towards either symmetry or *décor,* Boswell almost alone had the temerity to keep it clean and spare. In his journal he is a sort of Augustan Hemingway, rendering with exemplary obsession and discipline "the way it was." As Pottle says, "in him we seem to see the past through no medium at all, or at most through plate glass." Not that

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he can't work out in practically any modish style when he wants to: the Gibbonian, for example. He reports to Rousseau from Rome: "I remembered the rakish behaviour of Horace and other amorous Roman poets, and I thought that one might well allow one's self a little indulgence in a city where there were prostitutes licensed by the Cardinal Vicar." But normally he pitches it low, and "it is because Boswell's style is so scrupulously low-pitched," Pottle perceives, "that it affects us like the writing of a contemporary."

BOSWELL WOULD BE ravished by Pottle's book, for he lived always like a man who hoped that his biography would be an exhaustive affair. We can see now that his archives at Auchinleck, those monstrous bales and bundles braving time, constituted materials doggedly preserved for his inevitable biographer, whoever he might turn out to be. All he knew was that he would have one: he had done his part by making his life interesting—now let the biographer do his. Boswell seldom did anything without a consciousness that his future biographer's eye was upon him. Uncertain whether to marry an Irish girl of promise, for example, he inclines towards her because "my Irish connexion [would] make a pretty anecdote in my life." This awareness that meaning attaches to his life only as he is able to enter literature as a character worthy of a future biographer motivates much of his oddity. In his own lifetime he becomes consciously a literary character.

He is surely one of the first to realise Christopher Isherwood's point that "good autobiography is only achieved when its live original has qualities which would make him a suitable hero for a novel." Or, in Boswell's case, a play. Now he is Malvolio:

> I am always fixing some period for my perfection as far as possible. Let it be when my *Account of Corsica* is published. I shall then have a character which I must support. I will swear like an ancient disciple of Pythagoras to observe silence. I will be grave and reserved, though cheerful and communicative. . . .

Then again, as when he upbraids the actress Louisa Lewis for poxing him, he is Hamlet confronting Gertrude in her closet (IV, viii):

> BOSWELL: Do you know that I have been very unhappy since I saw you?
> LOUISA: How so, Sir?
> BOSWELL: Why, I am afraid that you don't love me so well, nor have not such a regard for me, as I thought you had.
> LOUISA: Nay, dear Sir! (*Seeming unconcerned.*)
> BOSWELL: Pray, Madam, have I no reason?
> LOUISA: No, indeed, Sir, you have not.
> BOSWELL: Have I no reason, Madam. Pray think.
> LOUISA: Sir!

Another time, travelling with Johnson near Loch Ness when both inadvertently frighten an old woman fearful of rape, he is (as Pottle has said elsewhere) an unlikely Prince Hal to Johnson's Falstaff:

> A good way up the Loch, I perceived a little hut with an oldish woman at the door of it. I knew it would be a scene for Mr. Johnson. . . . She . . . was afraid we wanted to go to bed to her. . . . Mr. Johnson and I afterwards made merry upon it. I said it was he who alarmed the poor woman's virtue. "No, sir," said he. "She'll say, 'There came a wicked young fellow, a wild young dog, who I believe would have ravished me had there not been with him a grave old gentleman who repressed him. But when he gets out of sight of his tutor, I'll warrant you he'll spare no woman he meets, young or old.'" "No," said I. "She'll say, 'There was a terrible ruffian who would have forced me, had it not been for a gentle, mild-looking youth, who, I take it, was an angel.'..."

It is Boswell's turn to play Falstaff when he answers a letter from Johnson which has directed him to empty his head of Corsica: "Empty my head of Corsica? Empty it of honour, empty it of humanity, empty it of friendship, empty it of piety?" And if he plays in and out of various Shakespearean roles, more uniformly he enacts a genteel version of Captain Macheath, with conscious traces of Joseph Addison (elegant sentiment), Sir Richard Steele (gaiety), and Samuel Johnson (judiciousness). Knowing that his identity is primarily that of a literary character, he contrives the events of his life so that it will not be wanting in dramatic materials, most of them the fruit of his talents for gross incongruity and wry self-criticism. And this is another reason for his literary success: his dualism of char-

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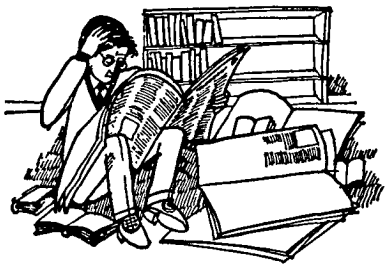
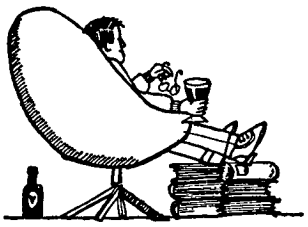
acter, his capacity to act with one part of himself and to record with quite another. When he is afire and at the top of his form he becomes playwright, actor, director, critic, and historian of the drama all at once. Thus the series of great Boswellian moments which Pottle offers us.

Some of these are priceless. Consider, for example, Boswell the university student, destined, as we know—and he surely has some inkling of it—to become one of the great satyrs of all time: afflicted at once with the adolescent sexual development of his person and at the same time with a Calvinist conviction of the sinfulness of it all, he meditates self-mutilation as a solution. "The example of Origen" is his inspiration. But, he assures us, "that madness passed." Or consider Boswell, in Scottish blue bonnet, soliciting the King of Prussia's notice on His Majesty's own parade-ground at Potsdam. Frederick the Great managed to contain his curiosity. Again, Boswell gains admittance to Rousseau, who has hidden himself in an obscure Swiss valley specifically to avoid this sort of thing, by sending in a note telling Rousseau how interesting he is: "Though I am still a young man, I have experienced such a variety of existence as will strike you with wonder." Triumphant with Rousseau, he next crashes Voltaire's house to dispute with him about the immortality of the soul. Voltaire, bored and exasperated, finds his only defence in affecting a fainting fit. Boswell patiently sits by, awaiting his recovery, and then renews the attack. We have Boswell reverently on his knees at Horace's presumed villa, and leading a window-smashing mob in Edinburgh to celebrate the final success of the Douglas Cause. Terrified at the possibility of rejection in marriage, he performs the 18th-century equivalent of Whitman's "I think I could turn and live with animals, they are so placid and self-contain'd." He entertains images of fleeing to America and harbouring with the Indians ("I had great thoughts of acquiring strength and fortitude"). Just before his marriage to his respectable cousin Margaret Montgomerie, he flies to London to clear away his gonorrhea with a course of Kennedy's Lisbon Diet Drink. Again, depressed by a severe gonorrheal attack, he cheers himself by dashing off to Stratford to appear at Garrick's Shakespeare Jubilee in the costume of an armed Corsican chief, wearing the legend *Viva la Libertà* on his hat and passing out copies of his own poem on the occasion. He carried with him to Stratford "a large wig and some rouge for disguise": those who don't realise the intensity of his role-playing will





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assume that these properties were part of his Corsican costume. But no: their purpose, it proves, was to prevent his being recognised in Stratford as James Boswell, Attorney, until he could assume his role of Boswell-as-Corsican-publicist. "Corsica Boswell" they called him, and this was the unmixed role he wanted to assume at the Jubilee.

ALL HIS LIFE he adored rituals and memorable "scenes" in which he played conspicuous parts. Had he not contrived all these scenes, he would have risked a life of placid uniformity which might have proved unattractive to a biographer. Leaving Edinburgh for London, he must ritualise: he decides to bow three times to the palace of Holyroodhouse, the symbol of antique Scottish self-respect. At Utrecht, deep in a fit of melancholy and all but convinced that he is a toy of Necessity, he walks out to the fields, draws his sword "glittering in the sun," and swears on the hilt to endure and not to babble about his depression. He loved contrasts and oppositions, the more egregious—and touching—the better. What he noticed on Corsica was the incongruity between the primitive setting and the elegant usages of the inhabitants. At Signor Antonetti's house in Morsiglia, a vile rustic backwater, he records with relish the presence of a Raphael copy: "There was no necessity for its being well done. To see the thing at all was what surprised me." And at Paoli's headquarters at Corte,

> When [my] passport was finished, and ready to have the seal put to it, I was much pleased with a beautiful, simple incident. The Chancellor desired a small boy who was playing in the room by us, to run to his mother, and bring the great seal of the kingdom.

Most young men who have spent weeks preparing a seduction would want to get on with it immediately when the opportunity for consummation was at hand. But Boswell is Boswell, and he must do it his way. While Louisa undresses, he stalls: he takes a candle and strolls out to the dark inn-yard, in a very cold mid-January. "I experienced for some minutes," he writes, "the rigours of the season, and called into my mind many terrible ideas of hardships, that I might make a transition from such dreary thoughts to the most gay and delicious feelings." An involvement in incongruity is indispensable to his identity: not to "make a transition" on this occasion would be to risk nullity.

It is out of just such oppositions and incongruities as these, whether observed or contrived, that Boswell creates his literature. His aim for focusing on the incongruous—and this is what distinguishes him from his contemporaries—is never satiric. It is instead profoundly sympathetic. He constantly welcomed incongruities in the world around him—for example, Johnson at the same table with Jack Wilkes, the equivalent of the late Pope Pius dining with Jimmy Hoffa—as a way of persuading himself that his own painful internal divisions had really a counterpart in the objective world outside and were not the deforming secret singularities which he feared they were. His eye for incongruity originates in an impulse of rationalisation and self-protection; but it ends as the moving spring of his permanent book, *The Life of Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* All that wisdom combined with all that sloth! all that charity together with all that brutality! all that intellectual beauty emanating from that hideous twitching frame! Boswell is true to his singularity to the end. Perhaps what makes him, finally, most resemble a modern writer is just this self-division in him, a sickness which he, at least, managed to redeem if not to subdue by transmuting it into something very like art.

Culture and Education

LAURENCE STENHOUSE

An exploration of the role of teacher, curricula and teaching methods from primary school to university, written in the light of the belief that education should encourage creative thinking rather than be merely a means of indoctrination. Mr. Stenhouse, Principal Lecturer in Education at Jordanhill College, Glasgow, has just been appointed Director of the Nuffield Schools Council Humanities Project for the raising of the school leaving age.

35/-

NELSON

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AUTHORS & CRITICS

Thoughts on the Personality Explosion

FRANK KERMODE's two articles on modernism [ENCOUNTER, March-April, 1966] usefully traced the connections between the principles of the great Modern Movement of fifty or more years ago and the seemingly desperate innovations of the post-Dada, post-surrealist *avant-garde* of the present day. He has made many things clear; and for that I am grateful. At the same time, I am a little uneasy about his suave and persuasive demonstration that *plus ça change*.... It seems to me that there are deeply revolutionary changes going on in our culture, though they are quieter, if more significant, than those associated with the self-conscious apostles of neo-modernism so agreeably discussed in Calvin Tomkins' *The Bride and the Bachelors*. I think that these changes should find a place within the general discussion of modernism that Kermode has initiated, even at the cost of somewhat modifying the neatness of his total picture.

What, briefly, I have in mind is a widespread shift from the traditional concept of the work of art (whether "minority" or "popular" art is immaterial) as an *artefact* to that of art as *performance*. This change has been intimately associated with the advent of the electronic media—notably, telephone, radio, television, gramophone records, and tape-recording—and the partial supersession of a visual-spatial basis of culture by an oral-aural one. Such notions are more freely circulated in America than in this country, but they will be familiar to readers of Marshall McLuhan's *The Gutenberg Galaxy* (1962) and *Understanding Media* (1964), and Walter J. Ong's *The Barbarian Within* (1962). Unfortunately, Professor McLuhan's way of expressing himself is so wild and his thought processes so eccentric that most English reviewers found a convenient excuse to brush aside the challenging and original content of his books; Fr. Ong, a polymathic but trendy American Jesuit, is a more rational and sober expositor of similar ideas, but his work is less known here. What I want to say will be quite heavily indebted to these two writers.

One of the points that Ong emphasises is the way in which modern criticism is strongly visual-spatial in its terminology; discussion of art is subsumed under the concept of the artefact, or self-sufficient, free-standing object, and "structure" has become an indispensable term for almost all contemporary critics.[1] The characteristic language of the palaeo-modernist masters was strongly visualist, as with Ezra Pound's "image," James Joyce's "epiphany," Wyndham Lewis' "vortex," and the "monuments" of T. S. Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent." And the central metaphors of the New Criticism have been even more strongly artefactal, as exemplified in Cleanth Brooks' *The Well Wrought Urn* and W. K. Wimsatt's *The Verbal Icon*. The way in which the visualist or iconic approach can persist even in an apparently revolutionary context is neatly illustrated in Kermode's quotation from Morse Peckham: "a work of art is what the *perceiver observes* in what has been culturally established as a *perceiver's space*." My italics should make this persistence clear; the effect is of an iconic artefact turned inside-out. Art as performance, on the other hand, exists in time rather than space. It is evanescent rather than an enduring monument (though the devices of modern technology can make the performance almost infinitely repeatable). Above all, the beholders are brought into a much more direct relation with the artist's personality than when they are contemplating an icon.

THIS LAST POINT RECALLS a debate that took place in the 1930s between C. S. Lewis and E. M. W. Tillyard (published as *The Personal Heresy*). Against Lewis, who advanced the received modern critical opinion that the value of a work of art inheres within it, and is irrelevant to its creator's personality, Tillyard claimed:

> I believe we read Keats in some measure because his poetry gives a version of a remarkable personality of which another version is his life. The two versions are not the same but they are analogous. Part of our response to poetry is in fact similar to the stirring experience when we meet someone whose personality impresses us.

Tillyard did not extract any extreme conclusions from this heavily-guarded statement,

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[1] A similar point was made independently by Donald Davie in a broadcast talk, "Two Analogies for Poetry," *The Listener*, 5 April 1962.

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which, on one level, merely reaffirms the assumptions of pre-modern biographical criticism. And yet it seems a valid implication of his position that one might, in some circumstances, positively prefer the life to the work of art, the personality to the icon which obliquely reflects it. One may compare Picasso's portentous observation:

> It's not what the artist does that counts, but what he is. Cézanne would never have interested me a bit if he had lived and thought like Jacques-Emile Blanche, even if the apples he had painted had been ten times as beautiful. What forces our interest is Cézanne's anxiety, that's Cézanne's lesson; the torments of Van Gogh—that is the actual drama of the man. The rest is a sham.

The prevailing context of twentieth century critical opinion, with its stress on "impersonality," makes such sentiments, in themselves so old-fashioned and so reminiscent of Romantic hero-worship, potentially revolutionary and subversive.

Fr. Ong has been much exercised by the problem of reconciling the impersonality of the artefact with the personality of the creator. In one of the best essays in *The Barbarian Within*, "The Jinnee in the Well Wrought Urn," he discusses this question with great penetration. Himself a believer in the New-Critical principles of iconic impersonality, he nevertheless understands why we constantly interrogate a work to discover the personality concealed in it: "if you so much as whisper that there is a jinnee in the urn, most onlookers will be only too willing to drop the urn without further ado. Broken, it will let the jinnee out, and they can ask him a few questions." (Anyone with much experience of teaching literature will, I think, confirm that this is a very deep-rooted tendency, however much one may fulminate against the "intentional fallacy.") People have an innate desire to enter into communion with other personalities, and remain dissatisfied with the impersonal contemplation of the aesthetic icon. Ong is not happy about the inclination to personalise art, but he implies that it is inevitable:

> Anything that bids for attention in an act of contemplation is a surrogate for a person. In proportion as the work of art is capable of being taken in full seriousness, it moves further and further along an asymptote to the curve of personality.[2]

Elsewhere in his book, Ong describes the way in which the electronic media have given a new dominance to sound, and, in particular, to the human voice and thus to personality:

> Heightening the oral-aural element in a culture does much more than merely de-emphasise vision. It subtly heightens the personalist element in a culture. For the plenary development of sound, the human voice, is a manifestation of the person. Even more than it is a manifestation of an understanding of objects, speech is a calling of one person to another, of an interior to an interior. Sight presents always surfaces, presents even depth as a lamination of surfaces, whereas sound presents always interiors, for sound is impossible without some resonance. The post-Baconian preoccupation with sight and "observation" produced the world of the Enlightenment, a world of objects and things without convincing personal presences, giving us the strangely silent universe which Newtonian physics and Deism both supposed. Printing was the harbinger of this Newtonian world, for printing is spectacularly allied with surface or "object" treatment of reality.

In these few sentences Ong outlines the approach which McLuhan has copiously adumbrated in his two books. For myself, I can only assert that, however open to criticism it may be on points of detail, I find this perspective wonderfully helpful in grasping some of the quietly revolutionary changes that are going on throughout our culture. (It is, incidentally, ironic to recall that something very like the Ong-McLuhan analysis was outlined nearly forty years ago by one of the most strongly visualist of the palaeo-modernists, though from a totally opposed point of view. In *Time and Western Man*, Wyndham Lewis worked out a chain of oppositions between contrasting concepts: the "good" entities were space, the eye, light, surface, architecture, permanence; the "bad" were time, the ear, darkness, interiority, music, flux.)

Some time ago, a record reviewer in one of the Sunday colour supplements wrote of Bob Dylan: "A poet? When he does his own stuff, yes; his wry, two-edged delivery gives life to what looks unpromising on paper." When I read this casual comment, it struck me as at least as revolutionary as anything solemnly spelt out in the modernist manifestos of the last eighty years. And, curiously enough, it had been anticipated by a remark that a friend made to me a year or so before: describing a poetry-reading by Robert Creeley, he said he

[2] Another writer has interestingly developed this discussion by suggesting that works of art should be approached as "persons" rather than as "objects"; see G. Ingli James, "The Autonomy of the Work of Art," *Sewanee Review*, Spring 1962.

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had found it an impressive occasion, although he guessed that Creeley's poems would not be very good "on the page." In both cases the implication seems to be that the "poetry" is what happens to the poems when they are sung or read by the composer, rather than something inherent in them; the printed words are merely a score from which the author can, as it were, perform himself.

The field of pop music offers many instructive examples of this process. It is commonly and justly remarked that there has been a steep decline in the quality of the popular song since the vintage years of the 1930s: Lennon and McCartney are no match for Cole Porter and George Gershwin, and their imitators are infinitely less so.[3] The typical song that moves quickly in and out of the hit charts (or doesn't even make them) is likely to be fragmentary and banal in melody, crude in rhythm, and puerile in its words; it will, in any case, be forgotten in a few weeks. George Melly has remarked: "Pop music has built-in obsolescence. Like paper cups and cheap ball-point pens, it's meant to be used and thrown away."[4] The differences between the songs of the present time and those of the '30s can be discussed from a number of viewpoints. There is, initially, the difference in audience: in the 1930s the teenager, economically speaking, had not been invented, and the audience for popular music was basically adult, with vicariously sophisticated tastes. The songs of someone like Cole Porter presumably reflected, both in their musical style and in their lyrics, the polished if brittle café-society world in which he habitually moved, and which could provide an acceptable, fantasy-tinged focus for the aspirations of the millions who enjoyed his music. Today, by contrast (as Kermode has correctly observed), the prole has become a dominant cultural ideal, and popular music has become correspondingly simplified. A music which directly reflects the deprived life-style of the American urban Negro has been avidly taken up (and subjected in the process to huge commercial exploitation) by the *déclassé* teen-agers of the affluent West and turned into a symbol of their own somewhat factitious cultural revolt. The spectacle of, say, The Animals singing "We Gotta Get Out of This Place," which has the genuine accents of proletarian desperation, to a cool, trend-setting adolescent audience provides a convenient emblem.

But the explanation in terms of the changing audience is not, in fact, sufficient. More important, perhaps, and more relevant to my present intention, are the technological means by which popular music is disseminated. In the '30s, sheet-music was still the dominant medium: the song was subject to typographical codification; it could then be de-coded, sung and played by anyone with the necessary skill. The ensuing performance might be in any particular style; a song may, perhaps, have been made famous by a particular performer, but there was no assumption that his performance had to be the model for all subsequent ones. The song was, in fact, an autonomous, free-standing artefact, offering itself to a variety of interpretations. The pop song of the '60s, on the other hand, is overwhelmingly disseminated by means of the gramophone record, which offers, not a typographical codification of the song, but the song itself, as a direct aural experience. Where the piece is performed by the composers (as is often the case) then one has a magical electronic capturing of a unique occasion, an indissoluble nexus of song, composers, and performance. Here, clearly, the artefact has been overthrown by the performance. And what has been gained in personal immediacy is lost in freedom of interpretation. The objective musical poverty of most present-day songs means that they cannot be subject to a variety of arrangements like the vintage compositions of Porter, Gershwin, or Kern. They are mostly intended as the vehicles of a particular voice and personality. To this extent the song, as a separate art-work, has been radically devalued in favour of the performer-composer. Any edition of *Juke Box Jury* will confirm the truth of this ("I didn't care too much for that one myself, but *anything* these boys do is sure to go to the top . . .").

IF MELODY AND STRUCTURE are much reduced in current pop, there is a certain amount of compensation in the curiously thick aural texture (produced by all the gimmickry of electronics) of many recent songs, which means that at a given moment the ear has quite a lot to take in (a parallel, perhaps, to the cult of retinal painting). One thinks of the bells, tambourines,

[3] As I read final proofs, I have been having increasing doubts about my assumption that present-day pop music is necessarily inferior to the material of the 'thirties. Pieces like the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby" and "Penny Lane," and some recent performances by the Beach Boys, have a very striking quality. (See Wilfrid Mellors' sympathetic article on pop music in the '60s, *New Statesman*, 24 February 1967.)

[4] On Hannah Arendt's formulation this fact would decisively exclude such music from the realm of art: "the proper intercourse with a work of art is certainly not using it; on the contrary, it must be removed carefully from the whole context of ordinary use objects to attain its proper place in the world." *The Human Condition* (1959), p. 147.

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harmoniums, rattles and other sound-effects that are added to the normal instrumental backing, and even more ambitious combinations, like the violin section of a symphony orchestra that can be heard on certain Tamla-Motown recordings, or the oratorio-like choral noises on some of The Righteous Brothers' performances. But the preoccupation with texture is most evident in the fascination with vocal quality, the lovingly-amplified, gravelly wail characteristic of Bob Dylan or Mick Jagger or Paul Jones or Sonny Bono. Here we may recall Ong's formulation: "the plenary development of sound, the human voice, is a manifestation of the person," which the recording engineers might well have made their motto. At all events, we can now see that *personalities* have replaced *songs* as the focus of interest in the contemporary pop scene (the fact that this direct projection of personality is heavily dependent on an impersonal technology is a central and recurring paradox).

The way in which personality has become a self-subsistent value in modern culture has, of course, been noticed by many critics. Daniel J. Boorstin, for instance, devotes a vigorous chapter of *The Image* (1962) to what he calls the "human pseudo-event," the "celebrity" who is well known for being well known; and, as Boorstin points out, in the jargon of modern communications "celebrity" and "personality" are interchangeable terms. But Boorstin's account, entertaining though it is, suffers from being rather superficial and too purely negative; he shows little inclination to pursue in depth the connections between the cult of pure personality and the media. (McLuhan refers to Boorstin in *Understanding Media* as a writer blinkered by a wholly typographical and literary perspective.) Ong's approach is subtler; while acknowledging the crudity and limitations of a media-fostered personality cult, he is also impressed by the philosophical and theological dimensions of contemporary personalism; and, as he shows, the various strands are not easily separated. He makes some interesting comments on television, undoubtedly the most powerful and influential of all the media at the present time. He remarks that the purely visual detail of television is of poor quality as compared with films or photographs, and is very dependent on the support of the aural elements, voice and music:

> Strangely enough, although it is in part a visualist development, television has moved away from this effect of print. It has been a personalising, not an objectifying, medium. The discussion panel, with its interchange of personalities, is properly a television phenomenon. Such personal interchange was difficult to manage on radio, for there individual persons could only with difficulty be kept distinct. Hence the use of voice was not brought to its fullest fruition.

It is, I think, possible to be in sympathy with Fr. Ong's philosophical personalism and still feel that on this specific aspect of television he is being too sanguine. The TV panel may indeed be a good medium for the "interchange of personalities"; what is not at all clear is whether it is an effective medium for the interchange of ideas. Indeed, I am inclined to say that so far television has shown itself unable to cope with the presentation of ideas as such; the pressure to exploit personality is all too strong. In his debate with Tillyard, C. S. Lewis made the point that human personality demands an affective, not a contemplative response. To subject a human being to a detached, appraising gaze is simply insulting:

> It is to make of a man a mere thing, a spectacle. We do not wish to be thus treated ourselves. Is there, in social life, a grosser incivility than that of thinking about the man who addresses us instead of thinking about what he says?

Lewis has made a very telling point; the fact remains, however, that what he condemns is precisely what television continually does. A leading expert on, say, trade union law, or the Swiss banking system, or the Japanese theatre, will be brought along to the studio to give his ninety seconds or so of wisdom. But as he talks the camera will be distracting attention from his words by focusing on his left ear or some other physical configuration, while the interviewer asks questions which are not particularly designed to elucidate the truth of what the man is saying, but to "draw him out," to provoke him into some singular revelation of personality. The viewers are not so much expected to learn something as to see an expert "perform," to be put through his paces; there may well be an anti-élitist bias implicit in the medium, betraying a democratic suspicion of experts as such and a corresponding desire to put them down. The whole process may be good entertainment, but it is thoroughly inimical to the free play of ideas. (There are some signs of an improvement: the discussions that take place on BBC 2's *Late Night Line-Up* mark a real step towards grown-up TV; here the anchor-men actually seem, some of the time, to be interested in what is being said, rather than fidgeting away at "drawing out" the speakers.) Marshall McLuhan has made much of the slogan, "THE MEDIUM IS THE MESSAGE," meaning that the overt content of the medium is much less important than the ways in which the medium affects our sensibilities. But one

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aspect of the Message seems to be (to adapt William Carlos Williams' famous saying, "No Ideas but in Things"): "No Ideas but in Persons," which is very nearly tantamount to saying, "No Ideas."

THE voice-personality-performance nexus, which is one of the major products of the electronic media in the realm of mass culture, can be closely paralleled in the sphere of minority art. I have already referred to Robert Creeley as a performer of his own verse, and in the past few years there has been a considerable revival of poetry as a performed and oral-aural art, often in conjunction with jazz. The parallel with jazz suggests that there is no reason why verse should not be orally improvised and then captured on tape, thus entirely by-passing the print medium. Doubtless this already happens. In fact, I remember in the early '50s, when tape-recorders were much less common than they are now, a young man playing for me a tape of a poem he had composed and recorded. When I asked if I could *read* it, he said apologetically that he hadn't yet got around to writing it out. At the time, I didn't realise the deep cultural significance of the incident. A dominantly oral-aural poetry will, undoubtedly, seem crude and open-textured when read on the page. Clearly, many of the subtle and complex effects of a poetry written to be read, initially, in a spatially extended poem are unsuitable for a poem intended for declamation, and iconic criticism will have little to grasp. Arguably, one might want to call this poetry something else; John Wain has referred to a characteristic piece by Gregory Corso as "oratory" rather than "poetry." Such poetry already has its own aesthetic, laid down in Charles Olson's Projective Verse manifesto, which has been very influential among the American poets of the Black Mountain–San Francisco axis.[5] Olson specifically relates the quality of verse to the unique personal characteristics of its creator, and rejects the whole visualist approach associated with printing:

> And the line comes (I swear it) from the breath, from the breathing of the man who writes, at the moment that he writes, and thus is, it is here that, the daily work, the WORK gets in, for only he, the man who writes, can declare, at every moment, the line its metric and its ending—where its breathing shall come to, termination.... What we have suffered from, is manuscript, press, the removal of verse from its producer and its reproducer, the voice, a removal by one, by two removes from its place of origin *and* its destination.

The logic of this is clearly that the recording of the poet reading his own work should replace the printed book as the principal means of dissemination. Olson is, however, enthusiastic about the typewriter as an aid to the poet, since it helps oral composition and reproduction by providing regular and repeatable spaces that correspond to the musician's staves and bars. McLuhan remarks, "Seated at the typewriter, the poet, much in the manner of the jazz musician, has the experience of performance as composition." To counter a fairly evident difficulty, he blandly adds: "That the typewriter, which carried the Gutenberg technology into every nook and cranny of our culture and economy should, also, have given out with these opposite oral effects is a characteristic reversal."

IN VISUAL-SPATIAL TERMS the equivalent of Olson's verse-line as a breath-unit peculiar to its creator is the personal calligraphic shape we call a signature. The unique touch of a master has a particular value (often a pecuniary value at that: one thinks of the scribble on the tablecloth with which Picasso is said to pay for restaurant meals). The notion of an aesthetic Kilroy-was-here helps to explain much that has gone on in recent years amongst *avant-garde* painters. As Harold Rosenberg has insisted, Abstract Expressionism, or action painting, does not aim at producing the traditional art-object, or painting as artefact. It looks for a unique encounter of artist with paint and canvas, in other words, an act, an event, or a performance. (Mary McCarthy has complained in ENCOUNTER, "You cannot hang an event on a wall, only a picture.") In such an encounter the medium and the personality of the encounter are inseparably one. In Rosenberg's gnomic words:

> What is a painting that is not an object, nor the representation of an object, nor the analysis or impression of it, nor whatever else a painting has ever been—and which has also ceased to be the emblem of a personal struggle? It is the painter himself changed into a ghost, inhabiting the Art World. Here the common phrase, "I have bought an O-" (rather than a painting by O-) becomes literally true. The man who started to remake himself has made himself into a commodity with a trademark.[6]

In the rapid mutations of the New York art world, action painting was succeeded by Pop

[5] Particularly those represented in Donald M. Allen's anthology, *The New American Poetry 1945–60* (1960), which includes Olson's manifesto.

[6] *The Tradition of the New* (1962), p. 35. Rosenberg seems to be referring here to "weak" action painting, in which there is an insufficient element of struggle, but the distinction is not an easy one to grasp.

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Art, of whom Andy Warhol is one of the high priests:

> If, as it has been suggested, Abstract Expressionists have reduced to a minimum the difference between creator and creation, and Pop has reduced to a minimum the difference between ready-made and hand-made, then Warhol must be the new movement's perfect exponent.[7]

At first sight it would seem that the Pop Artists, with their stress on impersonal, mechanical forms of reproduction, silk-screen printing and so on, and their repudiation of the painting as something essentially hand-made, are moving in a diametrically opposite direction from the Abstract Expressionists, where the calligraphic record of a personal encounter is the unique source of value. And yet it is not difficult to see that the calligraphic element is relevant here, too, if in a different way. The final development of Warhol's love affair with the world of mass-produced artefacts is the real tins of Campbell's Soup which he signs and which then become saleable art-objects. What gives them their market value is, obviously, Mr. Warhol's *signature*. An identical tin signed by, say, Frank Kermode or myself would still be a tin of soup, not an art-object. The hyper-sophisticated connoisseurship which goes for such things is basically motivated by that traditional pursuit of the personality-cultist: autograph-hunting. It is the master's transforming, charismatic touch that we are really after.

IN DISCUSSING the contemporary New York *avant-garde*, questions of pure aesthetics become inextricably involved with socio-economic considerations: the whole scene only makes sense if it is looked at in a vulgar-Marxist way. Unlimited wealth and an insatiable taste for novelty keep the machine constantly in motion. Styles succeed one another almost with the rapidity of pop records, and in the process everyone is enriched: the artists and dealers by their earnings and profits, and the collectors by the investment value of their art-objects. (Artists who, for whatever reason, persist in painting in an "out" style do, however, have a thin time of it.) And for all the protestations of many artists that they want to move right away from personality and its manifestations, they have, despite themselves, become personalities (or celebrities), trapped within a promotional machine. A blank canvas by Rauschenberg is not just any old blank canvas (and a "silence" by John Cage will get more respect than a "silence" by a less well-known composer). The well-wrought urn may, indeed, be produced by a purely mechanical process, untouched by hand throughout; but it is still the jinnee who commands attention (and, perhaps, gets rich).

In his second essay Professor Kermode acknowledges, in passing, something of what I am trying to say, when he remarks: "Blankness and indifference, like the 'impersonality' of Eliot, become, from one angle, a kind of egoism, indeed dehumanisation has always been, from this angle, the apotheosis of the *culte du moi*." This points in the right direction, but I think the emphasis needs to be a good deal sharper. We are facing now, not a mere survival of Romantic egoism, but an infinitely complex multiple concern with personality, ranging all the way from the "human pseudo-events" manufactured by the PR men to the philosophy of Martin Buber, in which the voice-performance nexus of the electronic media is a crucial (if not the only) element. Fr. Ong has summed up the present situation with more serenity than I feel capable of myself:

> The twentieth century, from one point of view the most mechanised of all the ages of mankind, is from another point of view the most personalised. No other age has generated a whole philosophy of personalism such as one finds in the works of Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, and others. At a much less reflective, more superficial, and nevertheless significant level, no civilisation before our technological civilisation has given such attention to problems of personnel and personality in matters even of industrial performance. The "I" and the "thou" have never been the objects of more explicit treatment than now. In the future, alongside the digital and analogue computers and other mathematicising developments such as Western culture has specialised in more and more over the past few hundred years, the human person will receive more and more attention, not in every quarter but in significant milieus and ways.

In an age of manifest public dehumanisation, when the "organic" community has been overthrown by the modern bureaucratic state, and when mass production and, now, automation have banished human beings from many processes with which they were traditionally and intimately associated, one might indeed expect "free" personality to become an absolute value in itself. Ong's emblematic alignment of the computer and the person may come to characterise two opposed aspects of our culture just as much as Henry Adams' opposition between the Virgin and the Dynamo served to typify two different cultures.

[7] Mario Amaya, *Pop as Art* (1965), p. 103.

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In the process, however, "art" as we are accustomed to understanding it might disappear. Instead of the artefact, created and permeated by a given personality but ultimately standing apart from it, we may positively prefer the personality itself, without disguise or intermediary; in which case, the aesthetic will have been absorbed by the affective. I am reminded here of the final section of B. S. Johnson's highly ingenious novel, *Albert Angelo* (1964), in which the narrator brutally shatters the carefully composed fictional surface:

> Im trying to say something not tell a story telling stories is telling lies and I want to tell the truth about me about my experience about my truth about my truth to reality about sitting here writing looking out across Claremont Square trying to say something about the writing and nothing being an answer to the loneliness to the lack of loving.

He then goes on to put us right about all the details of his real experience which he has altered for fictional purposes. This recalls the argument about the essential "untruthfulness" of fiction which Kermode alludes to, but it also has larger implications. It may point to a dissatisfaction with the imposed impersonality of the novel form, which, as David Lodge remarks in his recent *Language of Fiction*, "of all literary genres is the one most firmly fixed in the Gutenberg galaxy. It is the characteristic literary product of the printing press." One sees a similar dissatisfaction reflected passim in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*. That Johnson nevertheless remains imprisoned in the typographical dimension is evident from the obtrusiveness of his lack of punctuation.

It is possible that the direct manifestation of personality will not replace art—but that something will persist and be generally accepted as art that nevertheless escapes all our present aesthetic terminology, rooted as it is in the objective, impersonal, and iconic; and which, in Ong's phrase, will move "further and further along an asymptote to the curve of personality." We should keep calm about the prospect; but either way, we can expect some revolutionary changes, even if we stop short of calling them "mutations." At least, I shall be surprised, though not particularly disappointed, if they fail to appear.

Bernard Bergonzi

Pomegranate

Each year more clearly you can see her dark flowers wither
to the sick light, or crush to our tighter embrace,
as she picks up her bag and her coat, drifts out to face
the statutory six-months with her mother.

She turns to my heart's cog; rounded, no longer the child
the courts shared between us, as a pomegranate cleft:
small need any more for the fury who would have left
me nothing . . . though god knows I have never reviled

her. "Be good to her," I say, this morning; "give her
my—" (I cannot finish). "And—forget me while you're there."
"You *both* say that!" She flicks her eyes . . ."Father, *must* I go?"

My green shoot, Kore, dawdles now at the brightening river's
ferry—waves once—head bent, March uncabling her hair—
then shoulders her bag, full of books I'll expect her to know.

D. M. Thomas

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EAST & WEST

Return to Yalta?

Non-Proliferation For Non-Scientists

THE PALAIS DES NATIONS at Geneva seems to have an almost ghostly irrelevance to the age of mini-skirts, LSD, and anti-ballistic missiles. Constructed in the bureaucratic-monumental "modern" of the inter-war years, the building is hopelessly dated, a throwback, like many of the international organisations housed in it, to the days of Briand, Stresemann, Austen Chamberlain and Litvinov. Inside, the atmosphere often recalls *Last Year at Marienbad*. One listens to the Commission on Human Rights, one reads a report on "The Uses of Tropical Hardwoods"—it is sometimes hard to tell the difference. One overhears a British junior civil servant animatedly instructing an eager Swiss girl on the intricate positions of various delegations, and the girl can only reply: "Oh, doctor, you make it all so clear. . . ."

At first sight, the sessions of the group which calls itself "ENDC" have the same eerie quality. An Italian civil servant (in bad English) reads a message from the Secretary-General, "expressing hopes" and citing the pertinent resolutions and documents of the General Assembly. Next, the Egyptian chairman of the day (in bad French) calls the delegates' attention to their "grave responsibilities." The public is then excluded from the hall—with relief, for the scheduled report of the Mexican delegate, on related activities in Latin America, is seventeen pages long.

Like most such international activities, ENDC has been going on for years and years and is the lineal descendant of similar undertakings which date back even further (in this case, to the Father of Disarmament Conferences, Tsar Nicholas II). It has also acquired the usual quota of diplomatic euphemisms and conventions, plus a rather special and increasingly arcane vocabulary.

ENDC stands for Eighteen Nations Disarmament Conference, although few have bothered recently to discuss the "general and complete disarmament" which everyone, of course, favours. The real subjects of the conference are known in the trade as "partial and collateral measures," that is, steps which do not involve reductions in the numbers of soldiers or weapons but do limit certain aspects of the continuing arms race.

The Eighteen Nations are really seventeen, for General de Gaulle decided years ago to boycott the negotiations. Nevertheless, France is symbolically represented by empty chairs. Most of the seventeen might well be similarly represented, for the real talking has been, from the beginning, between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the most significant talks have taken place outside Geneva (in New York, Washington, Moscow). It is, furthermore, taken for granted that two of the five nations most directly concerned with the conference's purposes—China as well as France—will neither aid its work nor soon ratify its conclusions.

THE CHIEF QUESTION before ENDC is: who shall and who shall not possess atomic weapons in the future? The question bears the formal, rather suggestive name of "non-proliferation"—also sometimes called "non-dissemination." The experts can explain the difference, and also define such new coinages as "vertical" and "horizontal" proliferation. The deliberations have already produced a new cosmography. On top of the normal continental, racial, economic and ideological distinctions among the nations of the earth, ENDC distinguishes among

1. "*Nuclear weapons states*" (the five atomic powers).
2. "*Peaceful nuclear states*" (nations which have atomic reactors but not bombs).
3. "*Nuclear potentials*" (which don't have either but could have both if they tried).
4. "*Non-nuclears*" (the familiar hewers of wood and drawers of water).

One of the main arguments being made for a non-proliferation treaty (NPT) concerns the so-called "hostile pairs"—*i.e.*, nations which hate each other, *e.g.* Egypt and Israel. Thus ENDCers can wrap up India, for example, as a "non-aligned peaceful nuclear," "hostilely paired" with Pakistan.

The scientific vocabulary is even more formidable (and also slightly suggestive). It includes "black boxes," "Swedish rods," and "fast-breeders" as well as fission, fusion, and the commonplace ingredients which incinerated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. However, most of the diplomats and politicians pay only scant attention to such terminology. For it is assumed, though rarely said, that each side has its own

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scientists and the usual complement of spies, and that the respective specialists will check and balance one another without the diplomats getting much beyond Elementary Physics.

Needless to say, bureaucratic anagrams have also entered the ENDC jargon. The talk this spring was all of IAEA and *Euratom*. IAEA is the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, a United Nations affiliate founded in 1953. *Euratom*, established in 1957, is the atomic equivalent of the Common Market and the Coal-Steel Community, with which it is shortly to be "fused" (bureaucratically, not atomically). Because of complex considerations too manifold to enumerate, the talk was about possible means of "marrying" the two, or else forgetting about both of them.

THE MORE one goes into such details, the more confused and depressing the picture looks. In fact, however, what has been going on is rather simple, although it has suited more than one interested party to make it appear as complicated as possible. For, despite the League of Nations accoutrements and the Cape Canaveral vocabulary, the Non-Proliferation Treaty is essentially a political event—and one that would be instantly comprehensible to Talleyrand or Bismarck.

The treaty itself, no matter how long it takes its final language to be refined, has only three basic ideas, which can be stated simply as follows:

> *1.* Countries which have nuclear weapons promise not to help other countries get them.
> *2.* Countries which don't have them promise to continue that way.
> *3.* Agreed means should be found to detect cheaters.

In the rarified realms of deterrence strategy and arms-control theory, none of these propositions has passed without some controversy. Thus it is argued, for example, that a treaty does not require international controls (idea number 3)—which involve too much political fuss, while national intelligence services can detect the cheaters anyway. This argument may well, in the end, dispose of the third proposition, and thus of the so-called "control clause" in American drafts of the treaty.

However, such theory cannot easily dispose of the first two ideas, for political reasons which have less to do with "hostile pairs" in the Orient or "black boxes" anywhere than with the three principal military actors of the twentieth century, America, Germany, and Russia.

"HAVE YOU NOTICED," a British journalist remarked as the Geneva conference reopened last February, "that the countries where the most stir is going on against the treaty are the old Axis: Germany, Italy and Japan?"

This was not quite literally true, for there had been some stir in India as well. Nevertheless, the most striking aspect of the non-proliferation controversy which erupted last winter was, indeed, the manner in which it regalvanised the old World War II lines of force—the "Grand Alliance" as well as the Axis.

The basic agreement on a treaty had been reached last fall, in direct negotiations between America and Russia, and a joint treaty draft was to be tabled by them at Geneva in February. These plans were deferred primarily because of the opposition which came from the German Right, and which directly recalled the wartime alignments. Konrad Adenauer called the treaty a "super-Morgenthau Plan." Franz-Josef Strauss said it was a "super-Yalta of cosmic proportions" as well as a "new Versailles." Axel Springer's raucuous *Bild-Zeitung* spoke of a *"diktat."* Ambassador Wilhelm Grewe declared the treaty in "fundamental contradiction" with the North Atlantic Treaty; and an unsigned article in Springer's *Welt* (also reportedly the work of a German diplomat) went on to declare that conclusion of the non-proliferation agreement was sufficient ground for Germany to renounce its NATO obligations ("just as" the Franco-Soviet pact of 1935 "dissolved the Locarno system"). William S. Schlamm (once grand vizier to Henry Luce in "American Century" days, now resident prophet at the Springer chain) called on Bonn to embark on an "independent atomic policy."

The German Left, in quite another spirit, acknowledged the same situation. Herbert Wehner hoped that the treaty would expose the dangerous illusions fostered (by Adenauer, Strauss, and Grewe) in the past. "We have been living beyond our political means," Wehner said, "pretending that we had become one of the victorious powers by some kind of adoption." *Der Spiegel* put it more bluntly:

> For the opponents of the treaty, led by Adenauer, Strauss, and Springer, its actual content is less dangerous than the basic understanding expressed in it: an alliance of the two atomic giants, the U.S.A. and the Soviet Union, the nightmare of all German cold-warriors since the founding of the Federal Republic.

Indeed, the Non-Proliferation Treaty can best be understood as part of a larger process, which a sage Swedish diplomat, Sven Backlund, has called "the de-Stalinisation of anti-Communism." The treaty was conceived in the Kennedy Administration, and the philosophy behind it was partly articulated in the famous American

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University speech ("We must conduct our affairs in such a way that it becomes in the Communists' interest to agree on a genuine peace...").

THE TREATY is a measure designed primarily, if not exclusively, to promote the habit of collaboration between the United States and the Soviet Union. As with the partial ban on atomic tests, the idea is to identify and emphasise a legitimate common interest, and then to proceed jointly in confronting the problems involved. By making such collaboration at least as normal as cold war, one may gradually wean post-Stalinist Russia (and the American Right) away from out-dated, unlimited ideological hostilities and toward a more realistic, more traditional diplomacy.

Since the supreme problems of the cold war (read: Germany) cannot easily be solved, one tries first to settle, piecemeal, more limited or "marginal" problems which may yield to joint effort. Thus, the partial test ban has been followed by the treaty demilitarising Outer Space and (more recently) by the agreement to keep nuclear weapons out of Latin America. The implications of the Non-Proliferation Treaty are somewhat more ambitious. Its advocates hope, for example, to promote, as a by-product, a joint American-Russian understanding (probably tacit rather than explicit) that would guarantee India against Chinese nuclear blackmail. As Washington and Moscow become used to common-sense accommodations in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, it may then gradually become possible to approach—jointly and in a new atmosphere—the problems of Central Europe, where the cold war began and still remains perilous.

This approach in fact signals another revolution in American foreign policy. It renders obsolete the NATO "bulwarks against Communism" strategy as well as the "opinion of mankind" philosophy which once set such store in majority votes at the UN General Assembly. It also implies the end of a Grand Design for Europe ("Atlantic partnership") which attempted to ignore both the division of Germany and the immutable fact that Paris, by any means of transportation, is closer to Moscow than to New York.

The Non-Proliferation Treaty involves a cautious return—under very different circumstances, and with far fewer illusions—to the belief held by Franklin Roosevelt that the only way to secure the peace was through the collaboration of the great powers who won World War II. The concept was undermined by Stalin, who saw no need to collaborate, and by the unilateral Western disarmament of 1945–48 which invited the Stalinisation of Hungary and Czechoslovakia (neither of which had been part of the Yalta bargain).

Nevertheless, Roosevelt's belief in the joint trusteeship of the great powers was enshrined in the original powers and composition of the UN Security Council, which was to be a kind of Permanent Big Five Foreign Ministers Conference, a modernised global version of the old "Concert of Europe." Although the Council gradually fell into disuse, it remains a fact—as General de Gaulle has delphically observed—that the five permanent members originally designated are the five atomic powers of today. The institution is at hand for collaboration among them, and one of the impressive aspects of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, as Rudolf Augstein has noted, is that it "secures the framework for a later understanding with both France and China, which is not yet in sight but is both possible and necessary."

THE QUESTION NEVERTHELESS arises as to why a formal treaty should be thought necessary—why 110 other countries must be dragged in—why, in short, America and Russia cannot simply enforce non-proliferation by tacit, bilateral understanding. Some of the answers are obvious. Neither power managed to prevent France and China from developing independent nuclear arsenals. Atomic technology keeps getting easier and cheaper, with more and more states capable of making bombs. Bloc discipline has broken down. Africa and large parts of Asia seem fundamentally out of the control of the great powers, etc.

Yet these and other arguments made at Geneva do not fully explain why both the United States and the Soviet Union now wish a formal commitment, on the part of the other and on the part of various allies, clients, and favour-seekers around the world. The desire to "improve the atmosphere"—the wish of moderates on each side to sway their own dogmatists and doubters to further dialogue—is certainly a large part of the answer. But this desire to erode the old suspicions is not merely abstract. It reflects, for each side, definite and disturbing experiences of recent years.

FOR THE UNITED STATES, the crucial experience was surely the Cuban missile crisis of 1962. Although this is now (and rightly) proclaimed as a triumph of American diplomacy, the fact remains that Khrushchev's introduction of strategic rockets into Cuba upset a major assumption of that diplomacy—namely, that the Soviet Premier, however militant and crude, however devoted to a narrow view of the

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Communist interest, was rational in his calculations. Three months before the missile crisis, all the experts would have agreed that Khrushchev would never be so foolish as to provoke a military confrontation off the American coast, especially in collaboration with so uncontrollable a partner as Fidel Castro. "He'd never do that —he'd be crazy." He did it.

The Cuban experience, therefore, calls into question an even older and more important assumption of Western policy—the belief that Russia would never freely yield control of atomic weapons to any of its allies or clients. By all rational calculations, this belief remains justified; Khrushchev himself cut off nuclear aid to China, and the new leadership has been far more prudent in all respects. But the Cuban episode (like the Chinese "Cultural Revolution" later) dramatised the incalculable, unpredictable element of the irrational which continues to operate in world politics. Today, there seems slight danger of atomic weapons turning up in North Viet Nam, Bulgaria or East Germany. Tomorrow, however, can no longer be guaranteed with the same old confidence.

For the United States, therefore, the Non-Proliferation Treaty represents an effort to make Russia's *de facto* abstention from "nuclear sharing" *de jure* and permanent: to invest it with the authority of open, high state policy and embed it in the system of international law, preferably in a self-enforcing way. For the American negotiators, the treaty acquired almost irresistible allure when Communist governments last September—for the first time—indicated a willingness to accept the sort of international controls for which the U.S. had been pressing, without success, since 1945. Poland and Czechoslovakia on that occasion offered to submit their nuclear facilities to the inspection of the Vienna IAEA if West Germany did likewise. The Soviet Union soon indicated that, while there was "no point" to such inspection on Soviet territory (or on that of the other nuclear-weapons powers), it was willing to accept controls for the other members of the "socialist community." This was, of course, a major departure from the suspicious hostility of Stalin and Khrushchev to any sort of controls anywhere. It offered the possibility of an epoch-making precedent—capable of later extension—on the long path to international order.

For the Soviet Union, the crucially disturbing experience was not sudden or dramatic, as in the case of Cuba, but gradual and cumulative. It was the growing military power of West Germany, and the unrelenting drive of Strauss, Gerhard Schroeder and other conservative Bonn leaders to obtain nuclear arms. In 1954, to be sure, as part of the treaties permitting German conventional rearmament, West Germany had formally renounced the "production" (though not acquisition) of atomic weapons "on its own territory" (though not elsewhere). But Moscow knew that Adenauer had made this renunciation only after a famous reassurance from Dulles that it was valid *rebus sic stantibus*, so long as everything else remained the same. (In 1966, when France withdrew from NATO integration, Dr. Schroeder was arguing privately that the disruption of the NATO system destroyed the entire complex of 1954 treaties, and therefore released Bonn from its atomic renunciation.)

Even the 1954 pledge, however, did not prevent the installation in West Germany of a huge arsenal of "tactical" and other nuclear weapons—many of them earmarked for German use under the so-called "two-key" system of control. (The Germans, for example, acquired Starfighter planes with strategic rockets; the Americans controlled, at nearby warehouses, the atomic warheads to be installed in them at minutes' notice.) The "two-key" system, as originally devised, was so loose that one of President Kennedy's first acts was to tighten the entire system of controls; at the same time, he commissioned a famous, though still secret, study under Roswell Gilpatric (then Deputy Defence Secretary) which fundamentally questioned the future utility of American nuclear weapons on the Continent. It was a measure of Bonn's influence over U.S. policy that neither Kennedy nor Johnson ever attempted to implement these recommendations.

By 1960, indeed, Strauss and General Lauris Norstad had already raised the so-called "nuclear sharing problem." The original demand was for a NATO middle-range land-based rocket system. Thereafter came the proposal for a multilateral nuclear force (MLF). The Germans at first wanted a "mixed-man" fleet of *Polaris* submarines, but (after Pentagon objections) were prepared to accept a fleet of surface ships. For the Russians, what must have been frightening was the chanciness and instability of American policy. Although Kennedy had privately considered the MLF a useful "agenda point"—something to keep the Germans talking for a few years—in the year of "interregnum" between his death and Johnson's re-election the proposal came very close to implementation. When McGeorge Bundy finally persuaded L.B.J. to drop it, in December 1964, the decisive factors were European: the open, manifest opposition of France and the no less tangible, although more discreet resistance of the newly-elected British Labour Government.

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ALTHOUGH THE MLF in its original form was scuttled at that time, Dr. Schroeder (with the aid of strong elements in the State Department) made another determined effort to revive it, in somewhat different form, a year later—and succeeded at least in his minimum objective of "keeping the option open." Thus, American drafts of a non-proliferation treaty continued to be so worded as to permit creation of a multilateral force. Needless to say, the Russians found such wording unacceptable.[1]

Parallel with the efforts to "share" U.S. nuclear weapons through NATO, Strauss a decade ago began seeking bilateral "co-operation" in the French atomic effort. In the last year of the Fourth Republic, he persuaded defence officials in Paris to agree to such "co-operation" in principle. The agreement in principle was confirmed, Strauss claims, in the first days of the Fifth Republic. It remained a dead letter through no fault of his own. It was Adenauer who allowed himself to be persuaded by de Gaulle that atomic ambitions would do Bonn, and the larger cause of German reunification, more harm than good.

Nevertheless, Ludwig Erhard has recently disclosed that, at his first meeting as Chancellor with de Gaulle in February 1964, he proposed a common Franco-German atomic force and, when this was rejected, joint missile development—with French warheads under a "two-key" system. These German strivings, together with the simultaneous campaign for the MLF, may well have helped influence de Gaulle toward his new policies of *détente, entente, co-operation* with Russia, and withdrawal from the NATO system.

Although de Gaulle continues to be unalterably opposed to German nuclear armament, and the MLF is as dead as the EDC, the hopes of the Bonn Right remain alive. For the misnamed German Gaullists, the Sixth French Republic may yet prove more amenable than the present tenant of the Elysée. As for the so-called Atlanticists, in the midst of the non-proliferation debate they began to clamour for the erection of a "multilateral" or "allied" anti-ballistic missile (ABM) system—nuclear, of course—on the Continent.

TO THE UNITED STATES, with its huge arsenal of rockets and bombs, these Bonn strivings may seem marginal in the world power balance. Many in Washington fail to understand why Moscow should feel "threatened" by a modest degree of German nuclear participation. The Russian perspective, however, is shaped by Russian experience: two disastrous German invasions in half a century, the last one costing seventeen million lives. No Russian government, whether headed by Tsar Nicholas II, Alexander Kerensky, or Andrei Sinyavsky, could regard the prospect of a nuclear-armed Germany with equanimity. And, while moderate Soviet officials have tended to accept the assurances of the Kennedy and Johnson administrations that no such development will come to pass, the Russians, just as much as the Americans, cannot be *sure* that circumstances will not alter. It seems highly improbable, for example, yet it is not completely outside the range of possibility—and I have heard Russians put it this way—that by 1969 a sympathiser of the John Birch Society, Ronald Reagan, could be President of the United States and Strauss Chancellor of Germany in coalition with the "neo-Nazi" National Democratic party.

WHILE the Americans have fretted about "hostile pairs" and "black boxes," the Russians have made no secret of the fact that the only signature on a non-proliferation treaty which really interests them is that of West Germany. A genuine negotiation became possible last fall only when the U.S. agreed to foreclose, firmly and finally, the MLF "option." The price Moscow was willing to pay for this foreclosure was substantial: acceptance, through the Polish-Czech proposal on IAEA inspection, of international arms-control on the territory of Communist states.

In the eyes of at least some Soviet leaders, therefore, the non-proliferation treaty offers a crucial test of American sympathies and intentions. The test is of a U.S. policy toward the European future which has been maintained for nearly two decades, and which has been seriously questioned in two great debates, in both cases by George Kennan: the first debate in 1950, when Dean Acheson undertook German rearmament; the second in 1957, when Dulles rejected any thought of "disengagement." For the Soviet Union today, the decisive question surely is whether Washington gives priority to its alliance with Bonn or to the dialogue with Moscow, to the cold war or to an eventual peace.

In the last analysis, the outcome of the struggle over Non-Proliferation will probably depend on the over-all view which a relatively small group of men—in Bonn and Moscow as well as Washington—have of the present state of Russia, Europe, and the world. Even in the same administrations, they are men of widely differing experience, background, temperament and political predisposition.

[1] See Don Cook, "The Art of Non-Proliferation," ENCOUNTER, July 1966.

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The story is told of a conference of American Ambassadors in Europe in 1963, at which Thomas K. Finletter, then U.S. permanent representative to NATO, was the main speaker. He gave an impassioned exposition of the need for the MLF. If the multilateral force did not come into being, he declared in his peroration, that would mean the end of NATO and the loss of the Cold War.

Kennan, then Ambassador in Yugoslavia, was dismayed. "Don't you realise," he asked, "that the cold war is over? We've won it—at least in the terms it was originally posed. The task now is to begin laying the groundwork for a peace settlement. . . ."

Those today who continue to share Finletter's NATO optic must (and do) regard the Non-Proliferation Treaty with horror, as "another Yalta." Those who share Kennan's view can and will support it as an indispensable first step toward a European security conference and ultimately, perhaps, the stable European order which neither Munich nor Yalta, neither NATO nor the Warsaw Pact, has been able to create.

Anatole Shub

The Accusation

There it was in your room,
dead, still warm but yes dead,
and you were the killer,
and no one else had come,
and no one had seen it
or heard that loud struggling.

What to do? It was late,
but never late enough.
You had friends, yet were they?
People seem sceptical
of someone else's luck;
police of course are worse.

Every old story
of every such room
came back to fill that night,
until you thought you'd wake
insane with hopeless fear
and never get out free.

There was one solution,
though, there was one for you—
tools lay in the drawers
and dishes on the shelves:
you cut, you trimmed, you cooked.
You sat. You ate yourself.

Jascha Kessler

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LETTERS

"Pathetic Maundy Money"

FRANK KERMODE's article on "Maundy Money" [ENCOUNTER, March] is an interesting attempt to defend the indefensible, and the kindest thing is to pass most of its arguments in silence. If I add a word at this late stage, it is not with the object of re-opening the whole sorry tale of misjudgment and mismanagement on the part of the Literature Panel of the Arts Council, beyond remarking how sad it is that Mr. Kermode should have been led into lending the authority of his taste and scholarship to this extraordinary demonstration.

I want simply to make a constructive suggestion before the embattled foolishness goes any further. It is this. If there is really any public money to spare for the encouragement of literature, then it should be devoted to subsidising the publication of books and periodicals. If books were cheaper, and if booksellers were encouraged by tax concessions and rate relief, and if responsible magazines were not always on the edge of bankruptcy, then *every* writer would breathe more freely, not merely those pin-pointed by this or that committee. Spread the benefits evenly, and that will make writing less of a desperate professional gamble than it is. Prizes are not the answer. To concentrate the available money in lumps, and then hand out the lumps to individuals, can only have one result—to weight the scales in favour of the Sunday writer, the amenable second-rater, and thus leave us with more of what we don't want: mediocre books. Why am I so sure of this? I can answer best with a counter-question. If a new writer arose who was the present-day equivalent of Joyce, of Eliot, of Lawrence, would he be given an award by the Arts Council committee or any committee?

Of course not. Because genuine originality is uncomfortable. It makes committee-men feel threatened. On the other hand, a few thousand pounds pumped into publishing and book-selling could easily alter the whole, at present very black, picture.

JOHN WAIN

Oxford

[More sorrow than anger, but also more heat than light. Mr. Wain seems very sure of the answer to his question, but he is probably wrong. The contemporary reception of *The Waste Land* suggests that Eliot would have had no difficulty in attracting a grant from an Arts Council. By the time of *Sons and Lovers* Lawrence, with Garnett behind him, would have been a certainty. Joyce could have called on Wells, Yeats and Pound as sponsors, and in fact did so when, before the publication of the *Portrait*, he received a grant from the Royal Literary Fund. A Panel will make mistakes, but I doubt if it could have gone wrong here. Anyway, Mr. Wain thinks it would have been wrong to give them grants; let Joyce get on with his Berlitzing, so long as we can have *Pomes Ha'penny Each*, and cheaper books by worse writers.

Why Mr. Wain thinks a monthly meeting turns independent writers into faceless frightened committee men I don't know. It is a preference for myth over reality I should not have expected from so tough a mind.—F.K.]

Burgess & Split Infinitives

I HAVE JUST READ with pleasure Anthony Burgess' review of two American dictionaries in your February issue. But there is one passage in which the reviewer dangerously gambles with his life—I'll explain that presently—and my question is, was there no editor on ENCOUNTER who could have saved the author of the review, who may be stuck out in Sussex without a German grammar? The risky undertaking I refer to is his attempt to illustrate usage of split infinitives by an analogy with German (p. 68, top). That's an impossibility, because you can't split the infinitive in German at all without getting a new meaning. Mr. Burgess' examples, for instance: *schnell zu gehen*, meaning "to walk quickly" is indeed the infinitive form; *zu schnell gehen* no longer is—the "*zu*" attaches itself to the adjective, and the meaning becomes "walking too quickly"; and as for *zu gehen schnell* —if Mr. Burgess had used such a locution in the presence of a Gestapo man in Germany during the Hitler phase he'd have been bundled to Auschwitz before he could bat an eye, because that happens to be a characteristically Yiddish word order; at least, to the German ear it is; and even if they'd paused long enough at the reception stage to ascertain that his "blood" was pure, they'd have done him in for corrupting the sacred tongue, you see. So it is merely a fortunate accident of time and place that has saved poor Anthony Burgess' life—and all because there is no copy editor at ENCOUNTER to hurl himself between an author and an unmitigated disaster. It is true that the fault is his, for being too exuberant in the use of German —but the quality of mercy, Gentlemen! Besides, German would have served him excellently where the derivation of "shit" is concerned (p. 69 bottom): the German *"Ausscheidung"* (excretion, excrement) quite supports T. C. Onions' derivation from *skheid* (Ger. *scheid*—). One simply can't be sure when and where one's German may come in handy.

SOPHIE WILKINS

Alfred A. Knopf, Inc
New York City

MY argument isn't invalidated. "To go too quickly" should be *zu schnell zu gehen.* I would never dream of using the form *zu gehen schnell*, since it is not *deutsch*. So my Jewish blood remains

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unspilt. So what's all the fuss about? And the German *Ausscheidung* doesn't necessarily support Onions' etymology. *Scheid-* represents a "voicing" of the earlier Germanic (still found, surely, in *Plattdeutsch*?) *Scheit.*

ANTHONY BURGESS

London

The German Coalition

ANATOLE SHUB's "Letter from Bonn" [ENCOUNTER, February] was a stimulating comment on recent German politics, but may I—with the benefit of some hindsight—venture to express my disagreement?

In an article for the January number of a French review I forecast that in its relations to Eastern Europe the Kiesinger/Brandt government would achieve "rapid successes." Hasn't it? Also that, in general, by proving their competence, Social Democratic ministers would enhance their prestige and thereby improve the S.P.D.'s chance to win a majority some day. The Social Democrats have been out of power for 36 years. They needed to prove to the electorate that they "know how to govern." Willy Brandt, Professor Karl Schiller, Herbert Wehner, *et al.* have today a much higher standing in public opinion than before. How can it be doubted that the S.P.D. benefits by this?

Mr. Shub writes, it seems to me, out of a feeling of comradely solidarity with the frustrated socialist minority and Günter Grass' group of left-wing intellectuals (although I suspect he would not go all the way with such brilliant heretics as Sebastian Haffner or Rudolph Augstein). Mr. Shub regrets the absence of "petitions, demonstrations, boycotts, strikes." But did a majority of Socialists feel so strongly opposed to a Coalition—which had, after all, been for years the public aim of their Party—as to be impelled to this kind of agitation? There have been quite satisfactory post-war coalitions between Socialists and Christian Democrats in Italy, Belgium, Austria and the Netherlands. Has anybody considered them "betrayals"? Can the same type of coalition, when it happens in West Germany, really be compared to the socialist vote for war credits in 1914? Surely a slight overstatement.

And does "Left," as Shub seems to believe, always mean less nationalism? One would hardly think so. In the great post-war debate between Konrad Adenauer and Kurt Schumacher on the role of Germany in Western Europe, who was more nationalist and irreconcilable? On the problems which then divided the two parties—Western integration and a mixed market economy—surely it is the Socialist Democrats who have had to change most.

The great coalition so far seems to provide a rather satisfactory government. I admit that after Professor Erhard's disgraceful record nearly any government would have appeared to do so. The present impetus to the liberalising foreign policy of "thaw" may stop as did Dr. Schroeder's; but it is too early to judge. If it is true, as Shub says, that Germans always vote Right, what other chance is there for the Social Democrats to affect the policies of their country than to share in the government, provided they can exercise effective influence? Or should they become a permanent powerless protest movement?

One may cast a cold eye—for some it is the *mal occhio*—on Kiesinger's government. My own hopes may soon appear as out-dated as Anatole Shub's gloom. Shouldn't this be the time for calmer and more reflective assessment?

FRANÇOIS BONDY

Paris

Osborne's Source

MR. JOHN OSBORNE [ENCOUNTER, April] seems to be having a hard time of it. He says he has read the unreadable, and then forgotten it. But he remembered to tell us about it.

D. S. MACPHAIL

Keep Hatch Farm,
Wokingham, Berkshire

Czechoslovakia

MR. TERENCE PRITTIE in his endeavour to state the case of West Germany's Slav neighbours [ENCOUNTER, February] has fallen into the trap prepared by British prejudice in favour of the Slavs and against all things German. He states the Federal Republic should once and for all declare the 1938 Munich Agreement null and void as a prerequisite to German-Slav reconciliation. He deliberately overlooks the fact—as so many British writers, journalists, historians, politicians, and actually almost everybody have done before him—that everything has two sides. Hitherto only the viewpoint of the Czechs has been considered and no other.

If it is admitted, as appears to be the case, that the Munich Agreement was valid under international law then it must be declared null and void, legally, by all parties who concluded it. From such an act there would flow certain consequences and not all in favour of the Czechs, who are well aware of them and do not wish for them. First, it would follow that the Czechs were not entitled to expel three million Sudeten Germans from their homeland, as they did, because they would still be Czechoslovak subjects. The persecution of their own citizens would be an act which, one hopes to be able to assume, could hardly be acquiesced in by the other countries, at least not by the British. Secondly, it would follow that if these Czechoslovak citizens were wrongfully expelled from their land and property they have a right to its return and to compensation.

On the other hand, if the Munich Agreement were unilaterally voided by the Federal Republic (and that is what the Czechs are clamouring for), then this would imply a renunciation of all the claims former Czechoslovak citizens might have against Czechoslovakia. That is precisely what no West German or other Government can do without the consent of those concerned. And why should anyone concerned agree to give up a material claim easily assessable in figures, even if it be hypothetical for the present? The Federal Government would undoubtedly be prepared to accept that

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HOW MANY ARTISTS *arrogantly refuse to be ordinary men! Yet this very ordinariness might have been enough to give them the authentic talent they could never have achieved without it. In spite of themselves, their refusal makes them slaves so that they fall below that common human measure they so violently despise. Vast numbers of others imagine that, to be a genius, it is only necessary to attain the common level. They do indeed attain it, but never rise above it. These two types of folly are complementary. The art which refuses the truth of everyday life loses its vitality. But this life, though necessary to it, is not all that it requires. The artist may not turn his back on reality, because it is his mission to justify it on a higher level. How can one justify what one has decided to ignore? Yet how can one transfigure it if one consents to be its slave? At the point where these opposing currents meet the true genius stands, calm and mysterious, like Rembrandt's philosopher who stands between darkness and light.*

ALBERT CAMUS

I HAVE A GREAT *aversion to the now conventional phrase "under-developed countries." Its origin is probably analogous to that of the absurd phrase "under-privileged," which we apply to a country's internal social affairs. Why cannot we use the plain term "unprivileged," or, to be more precise, just "poor"?*

We have coined the phrase "under-developed countries" to convey the impression that, if only things were a little different, the whole world could become an industrial area as highly organised as modern Chicago. Phrases like "undeveloped," "poor," "backward," or "have-not" are regarded as grossly discourteous and undiplomatic, and are rigorously excluded from all United Nations publications. Fortunately, however, this journal is not one of them.

That the whole world should become intensely developed industrially is perhaps a theoretical possibility. But there is a grave element of falsity about the phrase "underdeveloped," if it conveys the impression that every country is moving in that direction: when we examine all the available facts about economic development, we find that a number of countries are indubitably moving backwards, and a larger number are standing still.

COLIN CLARK

I EXPECTED THAT, *when I grew old, my hair would go white, my teeth fall out, my waistline expand, etc. All this has happened. I had also expected to be left several generations behind in the March of the Century. For I realise that nowadays there is a new generation every five years. How can this not be so, when anyone's forgotten youth is literally prehistoric to someone else twenty years his junior? To a recruit of 1939, a recruit of 1918 was using methods and thinking thoughts discarded by evolution, and to twenty-year-olds today, the Battle of Britain is a period that has to be "mugged up." As for the Thirties! . . .*

STEPHEN SPENDER

THERE ARE FASHIONS *in ladies' hats, men's beards, cooking utensils, chairs, politics, and political thought. I do not like fashionable ladies, fashionable chairs, or fashionable art, and I have a profound mistrust of fashionable thought. A plain woman who covers her mouth with lipstick and her nails with red enamel in 1954 does not become beautiful nor did a beautiful woman who didn't in 1854 become plain. "Modern" art of 1954 is not good because it is modern any more than what was "modern" art in 1854 was good because it was modern, yet the critics who review books, films, pictures, and music in our daily and weekly papers seem to assume that anything which is not the last word in modernity is negligible, unless, of course, it is so old as to be again in the fashion. So too with history, political science, and politics, truth is not determined by the latest fashion in dogma or doctrine of Moscow or Washington or by the latest fashion in theory of Oxford and Cambridge—it is not even determined by the most up-to-date columnist or political journalist.*

LEONARD WOOLF

ONE OF THE WELL-KNOWN *peculiarities of modern civilised opinion is its refusal to acknowledge the value of violence. This refusal is a virtue, but like many virtues it involves a certain wilful blindness and it encourages hypocrisy. We train ourselves to be shocked or bored by cultural images of violence, and our very concept of heroism tends to be a passive one: we are less drawn to the brave young men who kill large numbers of our enemies than to the heroic prisoners who endure torture without capitulating. In art, though we may still be able to understand and participate in the values of the* Iliad, *a modern writer like Ernest Hemingway we find somewhat embarrassing: there is no doubt that he stirs us, but we cannot help recognising also that he is a little childish. And in the criticism of popular culture, the presence of images of violence is often assumed to be in itself a sufficient ground for condemnation.*

ROBERT WARSHOW

BONNARD SAID ONE DAY *to his old friend, the painter Pankiewicz, who, with age, had come to a more and more exclusive admiration of realism and the Italian Renaissance: "Abstract painting will be the salvation of painting." And Bonnard was right* at the time. *Now, a few dozen years later, it is possible to suggest that the precise and humble study of nature will be the salvation of painting, which, without it, can only dry up. It is already withering in the imitation of primitive art, in an abstract academism narrower than all previous academisms.*

JOSEPH CZAPSKI

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Munich was, and is, null and void provided Czechoslovakia admits a claim to compensation by her former citizens in respect of all they have been wrongfully deprived of. Is there no moral and political obligation upon Czechoslovakia to undo the wrong they have inflicted upon millions of innocent Sudeten Germans, even if it be admitted that a certain number of their fellow citizens may have been traitors to their country? Do the British hang all Jamaicans, if the comparison be permitted, because one of them has committed a murder?

The fact is that Czechoslovakia refuses any compensation even to those former citizens whom they positively know beyond any doubt could never have been implicated in any crimes the Nazis and their followers have committed.

Why then should the Federal Republic now do what it cannot do, without the Czechs doing anything in return?

DR. J. H. MARTON

Vice-Chairman of the Association of former Sudeten German Social Democrats in Great Britain.

New Barnet, Herts

THE EJECTION of the Sudeten Germans from their homes at the end of the war was, quite simply, the result of the war itself. German political and military aggression against Czechoslovakia, and Nazi persecution of the people of that country, were the factors which caused the sufferings of the Sudeten Germans.

There is no parallel between war-time Czechoslovakia and Jamaica. The British have no reason to take any actions at all against Jamaicans. The Czechs took action against the Sudeten Germans, because they were identified with atrocious Nazi tyranny in Central Europe.

The case for West Germany deciding that the Munich Agreement is null and void is not based on a wish to benefit Czechoslovakia, unilaterally and obscurely. It is based on the thought that this will be in Germany's own interest, by helping to improve the political climate of Central Europe. It is only through such improvement that a real solution of the German problem can be found—in fact that Germany should be reunified in freedom.

It may be that Sudeten Germans should regard the renunciation of their personal claims to compensation—for undeniable sufferings—as their contribution towards the restoration of a united Germany which could be a bridge between East and West and a factor for peace and progress.

TERENCE PRITTIE

London

Raping the Classics

MR. RICHARD SCHECHNER [ENCOUNTER, December] is thinking of the theatre in terms of what it does for the audience. This is good. But just what does he intend to do for these people, and how does he intend to achieve it? It is not altogether clear to me just what "basic experience-structuring" is, and even less clear why a "multiplicity of visual and aural messages" should force this experience on anyone. Just why should people feel compelled to make more sense of this blast of messages than they do of a single "message"—or of their own lives? When Mr. Schechner talks about "changing the audience's perception," is he referring to something they do with their eyes and their ears and not with their minds and their hearts? I have always felt that it was one of the functions of art to make things mean, to put our experiences in a human framework that deepens our sense of being alive and not entirely alone; that one reason why art is so important is that through a disciplined vision it communicates a unity to people who are already failing to structure their experience in a multiplicity of messages.

If a theatre audience is to be furthered in understanding, what we need is a significant play significantly done so that it creates and reinforces meanings. The only reason why Mr. Schechner's "classic collage" should have any more significant effect on his audience than the blast of commercials between television programmes is that it contains parts of just those *works* (as opposed to happenings) to which a "literary culture" attaches a "silly awe" (*e.g., Hamlet*). Could it be that Mr. Schechner is proposing we take the few intelligent and moving elements that still find their way into our theatre and turn them into spectacle too? Such arty stylisations as he suggests point less often beyond themselves to worthwhile insights than they do at the people who put them together. If the task of integration is denied to the artist, there's not much left for him to do except to try and make more noise than the next fellow. Often the more spectacular productions are merely a technique of displacing the playwright and the play while ambitious directors make a name for themselves. It seems that whatever "happens" in Mr. Schechner's theatre, must happen at the expense of plot, character, thought and meaningful action.

I don't doubt that Mr. Schechner is sincerely looking for an alternative to that dark, empty theatre, but if the new look of the *Tulane Drama Review*—with its far-out and truncated articles, startling illustrations that certainly couldn't mean much to anybody, more frequent and poorer-taste advertising (including a couple of Village girls involved in some perceptual orgy with drama books to plug one of the magazine's lucrative sidelines), and its generally in-groupy and name-dropping character—is any indication of "the action which will prove the thinking," then perhaps Mr. Schechner has yet to learn that one can smash the proscenium arch to pieces, and shock the audience to his heart's content . . . and still signify nothing.

Plays must mean and meanings must be conveyed; and this kind of communication often best occurs in a focused scene approaching silence, and involving real characters in the real familial and societal situations that involve us all, and with whom we stay long enough for them (and us) to learn something. If the people in the audiences can be helped to improve their thinking and their feeling, we might begin by helping them to concentrate.

MICHAEL MCGUIRE

Lough Eske, Barnesmore
Donegal, Ireland

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London

THERE *are to be no more cosmopolitan flights of fancy on the stones at Brackley cemetery in Northamptonshire. No more stonemasons juggling with conjugations and tossing a chisel for the slant of an accent. For the town council has decreed that inscriptions should be as English as the Prayer Book and of indisputable tastefulness.*

Three months ago a headstone inscription for a teacher of Latin was put up. No fewer than four specialists were called in to elucidate. Their reading of the text differed. The teacher's friends had run together some line of pre-Christian poetry with others of a later date.

The Church found the inscription "heathen" —and the grave lay in the consecrated section. The inscription appeared to mean that the teacher had moulded character while on earth and was now to do so down below. Not, the council thought, that flippancy was intended. But the inscription was barred, and plain English was demanded for the future.

Roman Catholics tend to like a bit of Latin, and the Church can usually sort the quotations out. So, said the council, we are not imposing an absolute bar. Foreigners who tend to like their own language? In that case, a translator would be found to make sure that the inscription made sense and would be in harmony with the other graves around it. THE GUARDIAN

Paris

UPSET BECAUSE AN *Antwerp theatrical group had been staging his play "Les Mains Sales" for two weeks, Jean-Paul Sartre demanded that a local Belgian court award him financial compensation. The court refused, but it did order the Theatre de Fakkel to shut down its version of the play which centres around ideological conflicts among fellow Communists. Sartre's lawyer said Sartre "opposes any performance of the play anywhere because he feels the action no longer corresponds to the circumstances."*

N.Y. HERALD TRIBUNE

London

MR. HAMISH HAMILTON *tells us, apropos of our reference to airlines preferring soothing music, of the fate of a book, Professor J. K. Galbraith's study of the Wall Street 1929 collapse.*

Seeing no sign of his best-seller on the Idlewild bookstall, the professor asked the girl in charge, a little reproachfully, why not. "How could we sell it at an airport," she replied, "when its called The Great Crash?"

The inhibitions of New York's airport bookstall, over the sale of books with titles that might unsettle passengers, do not apparently afflict London. At Heathrow one can buy Alan Moorehead's The Fatal Impact *and Ralph Nader's* Unsafe At Any Speed. *We also hear that* From Here To Eternity *has been the subject of a special display at the airport.*

THE TIMES

Coventry

PEOPLE WHO HAD *to be dragged to a performance of Shakespeare or a symphony concert would use "whips and flails" to drive their children there, Lord Goodman, chairman of the Arts Council, said at Coventry yesterday. Many people did not want money spent for their own intellectual advancement.*

"In the main, I think it is an impertinence to suggest to them that we are in a position to guide their intellectual advancement. One of the basic freedoms of the Englishman is freedom from culture." THE GUARDIAN

Bad Godesberg

GERMAN *may become the international language of the deep. It makes divers sound much less like Donald Duck. In the helium-oxygen atmosphere of an underwater house speech is transformed into an unintelligible "quacking." Only after about three days do the men start to make any sense of it.*

In recent experiments in a diving chamber at Bad Godesberg, West Germany, the French diver, Dr. Pierre Cabarrou, found that when German was spoken the problem seemed to melt away. DAILY TELEGRAPH

London

KOSYGIN *got a friendly welcome in Britain. At one point a pretty 18-year-old girl popped past police escorts, greeted him with: "Hello, my old fruit."*

Which in British slang means roughly "old boy" and lacks the special connotation that the word has in American idiom. TIME

London

"THESE *d—d insolent Dutch!" So King Charles II was reputed to have referred to the people of Holland. His subjects called them "butter-boxes" and, stung by the gallant exploits against the English Navy of Admirals de Ruyter and van Tromp, coined a number of epithets which have remained part of the idiom of the English language.*

"Dutch courage" is a poor version of the berserk-rage, induced by copious draughts of Holland's gin. A "Dutch treat" or "Dutch party" is an occasion when guests have to pay for themselves. A "Dutch uncle" is of no good whatever to his nephews and nieces; most demanding epithet of all, a "Dutch wife" is a bolster used to absorb body-perspiration in the tropics.

Before we or our allies thought up "Jerry," "Hun," "Bosche," and "Kraut," we called a German a Dutchman when in uncomplimentary mood. It might seem that the Dutch were never to be forgiven for the greatest crime on earth—they tried to take our sea away from us.

THE GUARDIAN

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Symbol Shy?

It is rare that I feel the necessity of questioning the validity of ENCOUNTER articles or reviews; I may hold differing opinions from those of your usually excellent correspondents but they invariably make constructive comment and unbiased criticism. There is regrettably a glaring exception to these high principles in a review entitled "Symbol-Shy" by Colin Falck in the March issue.

In his opening remarks Mr. Falck takes exception to the Fulcrum Press' publicity blurb regarding Snyder's prowess and maturity. Is Mr. Falck reviewing dust jackets? His comments then go on to vague generalisations about Snyder's background, a subject on which his knowledge appears at best scant. Knowledge of a poet's life is valuable in attempting to understand the motivation of his work; but the poetry stands or falls on its merits whether written by a homosexual cowboy from Wyoming or a singing nun from Amsterdam (and regardless of any publicity given on dust jackets or otherwise.

The reception accorded to this book by poets, writers and readers over the past few months has been overwhelmingly favourable. This reaction from intelligent knowledgeable people could not have occurred if Mr. Falck's rancorous comments were responsible or accurate.

M. F. GOLDING

Middleton-on-Sea,
Sussex

Prizes

THE ARTS COUNCIL should consider a grant for a partially subsidised centre where writers could work with the minimum of problems and interruptions. I recently visited Eastern Europe where excellent facilities exist in rural surroundings, to enable authors to work in comparative seclusion at low cost. Sometimes publishers would be willing to defray the expenses of writers who are impeded by family or urban diversions, to facilitate delivery of MSS. Such payments would be exempt from tax.

The U.S.A. also has subsidised Writers' Colonies, for instance Yaddo, where books have been completed that might not otherwise exist.

I agree with Professor Kermode's viewpoint [ENCOUNTER, March] that more prizes and awards would encourage writers and artists. The distribution of funds by the Arts Council should be regarded as a sign of awareness of this need, which may provide stimulus to a craft at present suffering from a paucity of new talent.

PETER OWEN

Peter Owen Ltd., Publishers
London

AUTHORS

H. R. Trevor-Roper is Regius Professor of History at Oxford. Among his books are *The Last Days of Hitler* (1947), *The Gentry, 1540–1640* (1953), *Historical Essays* (1957), and *The Rise of Christian Europe* (1965). Among his contributions to ENCOUNTER are critical studies on the works of Arnold Toynbee (June 1957), A. J. P. Taylor (July 1961), and E. H. Carr (May 1962)....

Rita Hinden is the editor of *Socialist Commentary* and is the author of *Africa and Democracy* (ENCOUNTER Pamphlet No. 8) and "On African Socialism," ENCOUNTER, March 1964....

Paul Fussell, Professor of English at Rutgers University, is the author of *The Rhetorical World of Augustan Humanism* (Clarendon Press, 1965). He is at work on a critical book on Samuel Johnson....

Pamela Hansford Johnson's book *On Iniquity*, discussed in "Column" this month, is published by Macmillan (16s.)....

Mordecai Richler a Canadian writer living in Britain, is the author of *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* and *The Incomparable Atuk*; his new novel will be published by André Deutsch early next year. Among his articles for ENCOUNTER are "Norman Mailer" (July 1965), "Quebec Oui, Ottawa Non!" (December 1964), and "London Province" July 1962)....

Andrei Sinyavsky's critique of Evtushenko's poetry (ENCOUNTER, April) was first published in Russian, and in Russia, in a non-licensed review called *Phoenix 66*. (Its editor, Yuri Galanskov, as we now learn, has also been sentenced to a term in jail.) The international copyright is held by *Grani* and Possev-Verlag (Frankfurt-am-Main)....

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